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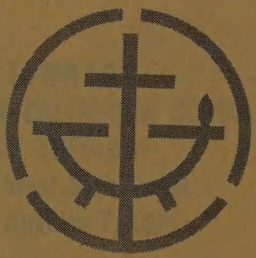

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MIRACLES AND CHRISTIANITY

LIFE ON GOD'S PLAN

BY THE

REV. PROF. H. R. MACKINTOSH, D.D.

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MIRACLES AND CHRISTIANITY

BY

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ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

Of late it has been far from easy to name an English book on miracles which is at once modern, relevant, and positive. The influential works of Mozley and Bruce, although in no way obsolete, were published in 1865 and 1886 respectively; and the student of to-day will naturally ask a treatment of the subject which contemplates the more recent discussions in theology and philosophy.

One merit of Professor Wendland's book, issued in German only a year since, is its steady hold, as it appears to me, of sane and lucid principle. His plan and point of view have enabled him to bring out leading ideas, unencumbered by details; and amongst these ideas are some which his critics of different schools agree in thinking peculiarly helpful for to-day. I think we need his teaching that faith in miracle is faith in a living God; that there are no 'immutable laws of nature' which miracle has to violate; and that we cannot limit miracle to the past or to the human soul, ignoring the incessant new departures to be found in the spheres both of nature and of

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redemption. No *à priori* decision, it is true, can be laid down as to the exact bearing of these principles on the Bible record of particular supernatural events. It is vain to forestall the conclusions of reverent inquiry. Of the soundness of the principles in themselves, however, or of their essential accord with Bible religion, and with the vital instinct of faith, it is scarcely possible to be in doubt. Certainly it is on some such lines as these that Christian men must escape from the haunting naturalistic monism which still saddens and imprisons a multitude of else buoyant spirits, and which is so palpably inconsistent with the genius of our religion. For many at this hour the great choice lies between the monistic conception of the universe and Jesus' thought of God; and it is in the belief that the following argument will help men to choose rightly that it is now offered to the English reader.

My best thanks are due to my friend, Prof. D. S. Cairns, of Aberdeen, who read the proofs, and whose criticism and encouragement have helped me much.

H. R. MACKINTOSH.

EDINBURGH, 9*th May* 1911.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

'THE question of miracle is settled; theology has more important problems on its hands.' I am well aware that this feeling is very widely diffused. And it may well be that many will consider a new treatment of the problem of miracle as only labour thrown away. Yet the question is one which incessantly rises up anew, and—particularly at the present time—will not consent to rest. Ultimately it is a special case of the more general problem how the religious interpretation of things is related to exact science and to philosophy. Now one who is convinced that religion rests upon experience of a unique and independent kind must hold firmly to the specifically religious conception of the miraculous; but none the less he is bound to relate it to the ideas of natural law, causality,

and the causal nexus. In the last resort all these ideas apprehend definite aspects of reality, while yet none of them explains the existent completely and without remainder. Hence religious thought has its own place alongside of science and history, nor is there any necessity why they should interfere with or neutralise each other. If what religion does is not to paint a world of beautiful illusion, but reveal an objective reality, then religious thought, as unveiling to us the meaning of existence, must be laid down as the basis of our world-interpretation and made supreme over all other forms of knowledge.

In the discussion of the miraculous, catch-words have often played a great part. Unscrutinised assumptions are often put forward as if they were the verified results of science; and put forward the more loudly and emphatically the less their scope and import have been examined. Finally, the nature of the question treated in this book renders it by no means superfluous to explain that I have not written in the interest of any theological party.

Perhaps no party will be satisfied with my conclusions. Nor must I omit to mention that I am greatly indebted to the very writers whose arguments on miracle I have been led to criticise adversely—in particular Schleiermacher, Lipsius, Troeltsch, Wendt, Herrmann, and others.

JOHANNES WENDLAND.

BASEL, 16*th May* 1910.

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CHAPTER I

THE IDEA OF MIRACLE

Belief in miracle is connected in the closest way with belief in God. Fundamentally, it means just that there is a living God. If God is a mere idea, rising like the Absolute of Herbert Spencer on the far frontier of the phenomenal world,[1] then miracle must be denied. Belief in miracle stands simply for the position that if God is alive, He must reveal Himself in definite acts. A God merely postulated or inferred by the human mind does no miracles; He remains in silent inaction till man is kind enough to discover Him. The God of religious faith, on the other hand, stirs man out of inaction by His creative acts, and leaves him no rest till he submits himself to God. So with the utmost brevity we may define: miracles are acts of God. To believe in the living God and to believe in miracle are the same thing. It is inconsistent to accept the first and deny the second. And in point of

fact we find that even theologians who reject a particular species of miracle—for example, Biedermann,[2] Lipsius,[3] Ménégoz,[4] Traub,[5] Pfleiderer,[6] Troeltsch,[7] etc.—still employ the conception.

Is it a mere accommodation to the traditional view when we speak of faith in miracle even to-day? If it were indeed the case that the conception no longer fitted into our thinking, then of course we should logically have to discard it. Accommodations and insincere compromises ought not to control scientific terminology. But I see no possibility of purging the language of religion and theology from the ideas of 'miracle' and 'revelation.'

If, then, many theologians first combat faith in miracle, and afterwards concede that 'all the same, miracles in a certain sense do happen,' this—on the supposition that the concession is seriously meant—indicates that we ought to start with what is really the main point: What is the positive significance of faith in miracle? Why is it really necessary? Why is the idea of miracle one with which we cannot dispense? And of course we are bound just as decisively to repudiate false ideas.

The idea of miracle is necessary, because God is not merely immanent in the world. Denial of miracle is quite intelligible from the pantheistic point of view. But if God's being transcends the world, then His intramundane action cannot but wear the aspect of miracle, since He is then affirming His transcendence within the world. A wrong idea of miracle is the necessary result of conceiving God's relation to the world as exclusively transcendent; for then His action must come breaking in upon the phenomenal order in miracles which are isolated and abrupt. This is a point of view which leads inevitably to the ideas of 'violation of the laws of nature,' 'abrogation of the regular order,' 'breach of the causal nexus.' And the polemic against the miraculous justly makes positions of this kind an object of attack.

If men are to experience miracles, however, a subjective condition must be present on their part, viz., personal faith, or a willingness to pay heed to indications of the Divine. No miracle can be experienced without this. Thus it is clear from Scripture, and especially from the New Testament, that no miracles are ever experienced by unbelievers. Even when they

perceive the same events as believers do, yet they miss the action of God. Jesus' adversaries saw His healing acts, and drew from them the inference that He was in league with the devil. To this conception of miracle it is often objected that miracles are really denied unless we undertake to prove to any and every one by outward evidences that a miracle has taken place. Catholic theology especially tries, by means of thoroughgoing objective investigation, to show in the case of each given miracle—*e.g.* striking cures at places of devout pilgrimage—that 'natural' causes of the event in question were all either absent or inadequate. That, it is held, forces on us the conclusion: Here is a miracle which every rational being must acknowledge. But this method of proof is always dubious. For the multiplicity of co-operant causes never can be completely surveyed, or the interposition of Divine action proved empirically. No strict proof, therefore, is ever possible.

The idea of miracle in religion, accordingly, presupposes that religious experience has an independent, unique, and real significance. But some one may say: this is a subjectivity which does away with all objective

miracles. If it depends on the personal impression we have of an event whether it is to be called a miracle or not, nothing remains except miracles of a subjective character. No objective standard exists.[8] Subjectivity of this kind, however, is really unavoidable. Without subjective personal faith there is no such thing as religious knowledge or perception of the Divine working. Here Protestants of every shade are at one. We ought to note, however, that this subjective perception of faith is no mere empty imagination.[9] Of course it is true that subjectivity would become scepticism if it meant that I suppose a given event to be a miracle simply because to believe this benefits and comforts me; that I must hold to a view so beneficial if I am to maintain myself in the conflict of life. The belief enables me to preserve my independence of soul under the pressure of life's mischances. It is thus—so the argument runs—that the individual mind comes by its faith in miracle. Such faith is not objectively demonstrable. But the pious man is content with finding that it helps him and does him good.

Theories of this sort, in line as they are with

Feuerbach's conception of religion, as also with the modern theory of knowledge known as Pragmatism—they have also been wrongly ascribed to writers like Ritschl—would certainly destroy not only faith in miracle, but faith in God. But in the judgment of the man who experiences miracles, he does not merely *suppose* himself to see God's working in this or that event. His faith stands and falls with the certainty that that interpretation is the right one. No doubt the believer may occasionally misconceive what God is saying to him. God's ways are higher than our understanding. God's counsels, ofttimes, are to us inscrutable, and sometimes they are misinterpreted. But that God does make Himself known to man, and that we men, even though it be imperfectly, are able to understand what He is saying, is a conviction so fundamental that with it religion stands and falls. The truth of this faith, indeed, cannot be demonstrated to any one who stands outside the faith itself. For it is the nature of faith not to be susceptible of demonstration. Nevertheless, it draws its life from irrefragable experiences, which are accessible to every one. Every so-called proof

is really a fingerpost pointing to certain experimental possibilities.

The etymology of the word 'miracle' and its synonyms leads to the same result. The German *Wunder*, the Latin *miraculum* and *mirabile*, the Greek *θαυμάσιον* and *θαυμαστόν*, the Hebrew פֶּלֶא and נִפְלָאָה, point to the meaning: an occurrence which excites wonder, a marvellous event. A miracle is named אוֹת = *σημεῖον*, or a sign, inasmuch as it indicates the Divine working; גְּבוּרָה = *δύναμις*, *δυναστεία*, = deed of power, עֲלִילָה, גְּדוּלָה = a great deed, נוֹרָאָה = an awful event, inasmuch as it brings the sublime will of God to execution, and evokes in men the impression of the extraordinary. The conceptions of מוֹפֵת = *τέρας* bring out the abnormality of the event.

It is important to note the idea of miracle which prevails in religious song; for the language of religion finds much more direct expression in song than in treatises of theology. It is striking how often the writers of our hymns speak of God's miracles. Everywhere we find the idea in its religious form.

'Gott ist "der rechte Wundermann,
Der bald erhöhn bald stürzen kann."'
(Georg Neumark.)

'Sei Lob und Ehre dem höchsten Gut,
Dem Vater aller Güte,
Dem Gott, der alle Wunder tut. . . .'

(J. J. Schütz.)

Everywhere the miracles of Providence, like those of creation and of redemption, are regarded as real miracles, not miracles only 'in a sense.'

'Herr entzünde mein Gemüte,
Dass ich deine Wundermacht,
Deine Gnade, Treu und Güte.
Stets erhebe Tag und Nacht.'

(L. Gotter.)

'Mein Auge sieht, wohin es blickt
Die Wunder deiner Werke.'

(Gellert.)

Luther calls on the Church to sing:

'Was Gott an uns gewendet hat,
Und seine süsse Wundertat;
Gar teur hat ers erworben.'

Stockfleth gives thanks that all God's operations have this character of miracle:

'Wunderanfang, herrlich Ende
Wo die wunderweisen Hände
Gottes führen ein und aus!
Wunderweislich ist sein Raten,
Wunderherrlich seine Taten,
Und du sprichst: Wo wills hinaus?'

But redemption also is felt to be a great miracle. The word 'Aus Gnaden soll ich selig werden' prompts the line:

'Dem Glauben ists ein Wunderding.'
(Chr. Scheidt.)

And Th. Hiller makes confession:

'Mir ist Erbarmung widerfahren,
Erbarmung, deren ich nicht wert;
Das zähl ich zu dem Wunderbaren.'

Historical events, too, like victory in the Wars of Freedom, are viewed as miracles:

'Wem soll der erste Dank erschallen?
Dem Gott, der gross und wunderbar
Aus langer Schande Nacht uns allen
Im Flammenglanz erschienen war.'
(E. M. Arndt.)

Thus two features are found in miracle; on the one hand, the amazing and unexpected, often rising to the inexplicable.[10] In this general sense it is possible to speak of miracle outside the sphere of religious faith. The main feature of a religious miracle, however, is this, that in the event which we designate as miraculous, *God is working*. And since God can only be known in religious experience, the third mark is that the given event has reference to man's salvation.

Now if belief in miracle, to use H. Maier's phrase, has 'cognitive' significance — significance, that is, for knowledge proper—which is given in and with the religious experience, this element of knowledge must be brought out. It consists in the judgment that there is going on in the world a perpetually creative Divine working. This religious assurance is instinctively related to all other knowledge; for we cannot put side by side the world of faith and the world of action, yet leave them entirely unrelated.[11] This element of knowledge implied in the conception of miracle suggests to natural science, history, and metaphysics that the ideas with which they operate do not, even when taken in their entirety, exhaust the whole field of reality. Here the ideas of natural law and causality come into view; and faith in miracle must endeavour to come to an understanding with them. But there are other aspects of reality, which the methods and conceptions of science and history are incompetent to grasp. Or, to put it positively, there is in the empirical world a working of God, nay, a creative working of what is new, an entrance of factors which cannot be in principle deduced from the actual present

condition of the universe.[11a] On the other hand, from belief in miracle the inference is often falsely drawn that there is such a thing as violation of the regular order, breach of the causal nexus, abrogation of natural law.

At first sight the two positions seem to be contradictory: first, there is a creative working of God in or upon the world;[12] secondly, this working of God does not break natural law, or contravene order, or abrogate the causal nexus. People say: How *can* God work that which is new in nature or in history—new in the sense that it is not explicable by the existing condition of things—unless He works by way of 'violation'? Certainly, God *would* work so, if empirical entities like 'natural law' and 'causal law' could be taken as metaphysically valid, or as exhaustive of reality. Once these conceptions have been given this wrong extension of meaning, it then becomes necessary for religion to speak of violation and abrogation. But a critical examination of what natural law and causal nexus really signify makes it clear that these ideas are far from expressing the fulness of reality. Accordingly we are free to assert a new working of God, manifesting itself in the

fields of nature, of history, and of spiritual life; a working which cannot be explained by the existing state of the universe, and therefore appears as miracle, yet which breaks, shatters, abrogates neither the laws and order of nature nor the causal nexus. The only things broken and shattered are erroneous conceptions of law and causality.

At present two conceptions of miracle are frequently differentiated: absolute miracle and relative miracle, or otherwise miracle subjective and objective, the *mirabile* and the *miraculum*, the religious and the metaphysical. By a religious miracle here is meant an event from which I gain the impression that God is working in it; a metaphysical miracle, on the other hand, means an event which cannot be explained from the totality of intramundane factors. The question then arises: Is the first conception sufficient, or does it logically involve the second? The first conception, anyhow, is fundamental. It brings out the emotional significance of the event. Every explanation of the word 'miracle' must start there. But the Christian view of things cannot rest satisfied with a merely subjective impression; it must

advance further to objectively metaphysical propositions, which express—so far as human ideas are capable of expressing—the actual working of God in the world. We need an idea of miracle which is metaphysical in the objective sense. And here we find the curious circumstance, that those theologians who reject the metaphysical conception, are involuntarily driven to use expressions corresponding to the conception they have rejected, if they are to do justice to their sense of the living action of God. This is particularly clear in the case of Harnack.[13] On the one hand he maintains that there can be no violation of the natural nexus, therefore no miracle in that sense. Yet the religious man, he holds, is certain that we are not 'helplessly yoked to an inexorable necessity,' but that 'a God exists who rules and governs, and whose power to compel nature we can move by prayer and make a part of our experience.' 'And as we all live, first and foremost, in the domain not of ideas but of perceptions, and in a language of metaphor, how can we avoid conceiving that which is Divine and makes us free as a mighty power working upon the order of nature, and breaking through or arresting it? This notion,

though it belong only to the region of fantasy and metaphor, will, it seems, last as long as religion itself.' This attitude to the problem of miracle is perfectly intelligible. Men feel impelled to gain a religious metaphysic in which the language of religious faith shall not be in perpetual contradiction to the categories of scientific thought. Moreover, they discover causes which have led, and must always lead, to these contradictions. They lie in the different modes in which religious and scientific conceptions are formed.

Similarly, in spite of his opposition to 'exclusive supernaturalism,' Troeltsch also uses expressions which flow from the metaphysical conception of miracle. He speaks of a 'working of the supersensible that breaks into the natural and phenomenal soul-life.' In that case, he adds, 'the empirico-phenomenal idea of causality is itself modified, so as to allow for the breaking through of heterogeneous forces from without.' [14]

I hold that if the word 'miracle' is to have not merely 'emotional' but also 'cognitive' significance, we must attain a metaphysical conception of miracle, one which will take its

place in knowledge proper. And this will embrace not simply a portion of those experiences which have been described as 'religious miracles,' a distinction held by the schoolmen (*e.g.* Albertus Magnus[15] and Thomas Aquinas[16]) thus being made to the effect that certain miracles are *mirabilia*, others *miracula*; rather the conception must embrace all events whatsoever to which the name miracle is applicable. Now this conception as valid in knowledge runs thus: Miracles are acts of God, bringing a new condition of things to pass which was not implicit in the existing state of the world. It assumes that reality has an aspect which no non-religious ideas can touch.

All contrasts between 'relative' and 'absolute' miracles disappear on closer inspection.[17] Let us take the definition: Absolute miracles are events inexplicable by the immanent causal nexus, and due to directly creative Divine action. This conception I unhesitatingly affirm, but I make it cover not merely certain religiously important events, but all such events. In fact the phrase 'immanent causal nexus' is a *contradictio in adjecto*; for it implies that an infinite series may be conceived as finite.[18] Now

every event has an aspect in which it is inexplicable. It is in no way inconsistent with this that this inexplicable aspect is not always prominent, so that we are justified in claiming to have explained the event. We cannot persist in causal explanation without coming upon scientific notions like force or atom which contain inextricable puzzles, or upon historical series of causation which open out endlessly. Every case of sickness or of healing, the germinating of seed, the fact that there is *any* settled order in the world—all this has a quite inexplicable side. Each particular causal explanation, we may say then, means that I break off feeling that these causes suffice me for my present purpose. Were I to seek to explain them also, I should be launched on the *regressus in infinitum*, without ever reaching my goal. If, for example, an accident happens when I am on shipboard, no doubt causal explanation will account for each separate detail; it can point, *e.g.* to the carelessness of the steersman. But why the steersman was careless precisely to-day, and, further, why I was led to travel by just this ship, and why these two lines converged—in principle all this is quite inexplicable.

Again, the statement that in miracle God works 'directly' is entirely justified; but it is a false view which represents God as working at one time indirectly, at another directly. The working of God is invariably direct. The expression 'God's direct working' is due to a false introduction of the ideas of law and causality into the religious view of the world. When that is done, it looks as if God worked in part through laws and ordinances, in part with a personal directness.

The result seems to be a sharp opposition between religious and scientific thought. Science must aim at explaining every event from the existing state of the universe; religion is convinced that in every important event there lies a new disclosure of God, not already given implicitly in the course of things, though in this latter also the Divine working is revealed. The ordinary defence of miracle is an attempt to prove, regarding a few isolated events, *e.g.* Biblical miracles, that *they* do not issue from the immanent nexus of things, but represent an immediate entrance of the transcendent factor, a direct working of God upon the world of phenomena. This method is always used in

connection with the person of Jesus. Jesus, that is, is held not to be explicable from the existent condition of the world as a whole; rather there appears in Him a revelation of God adding a new element to the whole world-fact. Now this is a perfectly proper argument. It is an argument, too, which may be given an extended application to the history of the universe; for the rise of the organic world is a creative miracle as over against the inorganic, and the human spirit likewise owes its origin to miraculous Divine action.

In truth, however, religion is much too modest when it rests satisfied with insisting on the entrance of a transcendent factor into the universe, as an immanently connected whole, only in rare and isolated cases. It ought to insist, as regards all events which demand a religious interpretation, that God's transcendence is perpetually working new things within the immanent structure of the world. At first this seems only to aggravate the tension. For the question no longer is: Shall we suppose that, in the case of certain Biblical miracles, there was a direct working of the Divine transcendence in the phenomenal world? On

the contrary, the same problem arises in every separate human life: Is thy future absolutely conditioned by the present state of the universe and the effects of God's working it now contains, or may new disclosures of God come in upon thy life, giving it a new direction not deducible from the past? Religion will always insist on the latter of these alternatives.

The aforesaid sharp conflict, therefore, has to do not merely with certain episodes in the Biblical tradition, which may be described as miracles in the special sense; it has equally to do with what is going on now. We shall find a solution emerging on some such lines as these.[19] Each science studies reality as a whole from a particular point of view. Natural science tries to ascertain the regular connections obtaining between facts; history, the relations of the ideas and forces at work in personalities; and for neither science is it competent to raise the question whether a transcendent factor is or is not manifesting itself in the phenomenal world. It is religious thought which fixes on what does not fall to the province of the other sciences. And irreconcilable antagonism would obtain between the two modes of thought—

the religious and the scientific—only if natural science and history could claim to give an exhaustive account of the universe of reality. But this they cannot do. Reality has still other sides, which only reveal themselves to the religious mind. Hence, when the question rises whether the mysteries indicated by the words 'development' and 'causal nexus' point to a transcendent factor, these sciences are not free to answer either affirmatively or negatively. *Accordingly, the idea of 'miracle' must not be forced on either science or history.* So long as these disciplines keep to their own province, they are bound to say that it is impossible for them to operate with any such conception. But it would be equally unwise on the part of theology to dispense with the metaphysical conception of miracle, from a wish to promote a supposed scientific harmony and agreement. She would only damage her own vital interests and encourage the view that God once for all completed His creative operation when, long ago, He brought the world into being. The co-existence of the transcendence and the immanence of God demands a continuous Divine process of creation. And since

the ideas of the 'state of the universe' and the 'intramundane nexus' stand for what are really unknown quantities, no scientific view is competent to make a pronouncement as to the possibilities latent in the actual universe, or as to what may enter the universe from a source lying beyond it.

CHAPTER II

THE BIBLICAL BELIEF IN MIRACLE [1]

We cannot take our departure from Biblical miracles, for there exists a vast domain of non-Biblical miracles which exhibit analogies with the Biblical narratives.

Stange [2] and Beth [3] warn us against overestimating these analogies. And it must be confessed that the comparative study of religions has not always escaped the tendency to exaggerate the parallels between Biblical and non-Biblical stories. At the same time, in view of the strong resemblance in many instances, we must start from the common element. And this element resides in the fact that there are striking events in the world which make on religious men the impression that in them a higher Divine power is at work. The content, too, of the events considered to be miraculous is very similar. Theophanies, visions, ecstasies, miraculous healings, the sudden rapture of men are such events, related and believed as miracles.

The domain of miracle, indeed, is vast; and we can only touch on the main points. In all peoples there is a quite definite similarity in respect of miracle. Two realms are distinguished, the occurrences of normal life, and events more infrequent and more striking. To the latter class belong sickness and death, plagues, floods, hail-storms, tempests. The most primitive form of faith in the supernatural is faith in sorcery. Sicknesses are attributed to the distant action of men who have bewitched other men by spells. Belief in sorcery becomes belief in miracle when sicknesses, like the delirium of fever and mental disturbance, are ascribed to the operation of spirits.[4] Belief in spirits, as acting in this place or that, is the lowest form of belief in the supernatural. The latter is especially prone to attach itself to striking psychical phenomena; seizures of cramp, violent mental convulsions, ecstasies, inspiration are all attributed to the influence of an indwelling spirit or demon. Not only so; originally even the sudden movement of sneezing was thought to be due to a demon; hence the varied forms of benediction used after sneezing among all peoples. Dreams, too, are

regarded as indications of the future, and for that reason there is an art of interpreting dreams which aims at ascertaining the future.

Theophanies are to be found among all peoples. Not merely are a man's particular resolves attributed to this cause—a God, it is said, gave him the thought; a God made him mad, hardened him, counselled him—but the Deity appears in plastic form, holding converse with men. Frequently these theophanies are traceable to dream-experiences, in which a man sees the Deity before him in the sensuously plastic form in which it is represented in popular tradition. But also in exalted states of soul men have had definite perceptive images of Deity, leading to actual experiences of visionary sight. It is misleading to explain the whole of religion by the impression of natural phenomena on the human mind, yet this element does play its part. In clouds, rain, tempests, wind, and hail there is felt the power of personal beings.

This of itself shows clearly how mistaken it is to set up the rule that wherever miracles come into a narrative, this is a sign of its unhistoricity. The miracle is rather in the perception of those who experience it. A

striking incident is interpreted as the work of a god or demon. Popular legend next takes up miraculous stories with enthusiasm. They are given a more realistic form; the supernatural element is emphasised. Legends wander from hero to hero, from place to place. Hence it is often difficult, or even impossible, to ascertain whether, or which, historical events have given rise to miracle-stories. In general it is a good rule that the more crass or fantastic miracle-stories are, the less credit they deserve.

Vaticination rests on the belief that certain men when in the ecstatic condition obtain a view of the future; divination is an attempt to foretell the future from certain signs, such as the flight of birds, the entrails of sacrificial animals, the lines of the human hand, or the position of the stars. In Babylon we find astrology strongly developed; in ancient Rome, divination. Heroes, such as Hercules, are raised to be demi-gods after death. Others are believed to have been begotten as sons of divinities.[5]

Very many parallels may be drawn between non-Biblical and Biblical miracles.[6] In the New Testament we find the view that demons

take up their abode in the bodies of the afflicted, producing madness, lunacy, epilepsy, as also blindness and dumbness. Exorcism of evil spirits is practised alike by Christians, Jews, and heathen. The miraculous cures and raisings of the dead which are related of Jesus, of Peter, of Elijah, and Elisha have numerous parallels; *e.g.* in the account which Suetonius and Tacitus [7] give of the cure said to have been achieved by the Emperor Vespasian, as also in the narratives of Philostratus regarding Apollonius of Tyana.

Still more marked are parallels in respect to belief in miracle furnished by the popular faith of Israel. Here certain miracles are on a low plane, *e.g.* the vaticinations of the old seers, and some fantastic miracles related of Moses, Joshua, and Elisha. It is a parallel, too, when plagues are attributed to the stroke of an angel (2 Kings xix. 35; 2 Sam. xxiv. 16).

Numerous and frequently observed analogies occur in theophanies, supernatural divine voices, visions, ecstasies, in prophecy and fortune-telling, in belief as to the predictive significance of dreams, and in the raising of the dead.

Are we then justified in making any funda-

mental distinction between the miracles of heathenism and those of the Bible? Stange says we are; Sabatier, Ménégoz and others deny it.

Sabatier[8] asserts that the conception of miracle in the Bible is 'absolutely the same as in profane literature.' Miracles, that is, are events 'which are produced contrary to the natural course of things solely by the direct intervention of a special Divine act of will.' Similarly Ménégoz: 'Miracles are always regarded as a supernatural intrusion of God into the natural order.'[9] 'The natural order bends under a superior will.'[10] Miracles are 'events which run counter to the natural course of things.'[11] Stange, on the other hand, finds that a fundamental difference exists. This consists in the fact that 'for the heathen mind the irrational fact of miracle is taken solely as an indication that Divine causality is at work, whereas, according to the Biblical view, the fact of miracle is always at the same time regarded as a token and criterion of the special *character* of the Divine working.'[12] I cannot think this distinction altogether accurate. For even in heathenism the character of deity is regarded as coming out in miracle, now as friendly, now

as hostile. In Biblical miracles, too, stress is sometimes laid on the simple fact that God is manifesting Himself as powerful and active, sometimes attention is rather called to His nature as revealed in the miraculous event. The distinction of 'that' and 'how,' of fact and mode, is not one of principle. Of course it is true that in the Old and New Testaments the wonder-working God has another essential nature than in heathen religions; and for that reason His specific mode of working even in miracle is different. Yet in the case of Old Testament miracles, like the violent deeds of Samson or the supernatural acts related of Elisha, the difference from ethnic stories is one only of degree. In many Old Testament passages the special character ascribed to God by Christian faith is scarcely prominent. Seeberg, therefore, formulates the distinction more correctly when he writes that 'Biblical miracles on the whole have a religious character, if we ignore certain elements of tribal saga and legend in the Old Testament.'[13] Only I feel that these elements of tribal saga and legend cannot be ignored.

As a second feature differentiating Biblical

from heathen miracles, Stange[14] adduces the fact that 'the Biblical conception of miracle relates not merely to isolated remarkable events, but is characteristic for the Divine working as a whole. What is covered by the idea of miracle is not merely particular events in nature, but the entirety of natural process; and that idea, besides, is applied not merely in regard to the manifestation of Divine power, but also in regard to the personal attitude of God. It is characteristic of Biblical religion not simply that it sees the God of miracle in isolated extraordinary occurrences of history, but rather that the works of His creation as a whole are interpreted as the act of His miraculous power, while, on the other hand, the execution and completion of His saving purpose is felt to be no less miraculous.'

Writers like Schultz and Dillmann agree with Stange in finding in the Bible this universally comprehensive conception. Schultz writes: 'The essence of miracle, therefore, is not that it is contrary to nature, but that it is a specially clear and striking evidence of the power and freedom of God in the promotion of His ends. It does not stand as something isolated and

disorderly over against a whole ordered on quite other principles, but as a salient and striking particular in contrast to other particulars which custom has rendered less striking, and which are less fitted to evoke the impression of the purposive omnipotence of God.' [15]

Dillmann agrees with this, when he says that 'If we define miracle as a phenomenon which is not explicable by the totality of natural laws known to us, the definition is one which does not fit the Old Testament, and is altogether wrong.' [16]

These theologians are right in holding that when extraordinary events are called miracles, the meaning is not that God works in these events only; yet it is certainly true, all the same, that God's working is specially conspicuous in His extraordinary action. And therefore the conception of miracle attaches itself predominantly to what is out of the common. It is only occasionally that we meet in the Old Testament an idea of the miraculous which —using modern categories— we may name the 'wider' idea. For example, in Job v. 9 ff., the following instances occur of Divine miracle: God gives rain upon the earth; He lifts up the lowly; He comforts the sorrowful;

He frustrates the devices of the crafty; He saves the needy. Psalm cvii. names as instances of God's wonderful works the rescue of wanderers astray in the desert, the liberation of prisoners, the healing of those sick unto death, the deliverance of sailors from the tempest.

When psalmists and prophets tell of the miracles of yore, it is never as meaning to say: Things of this sort happened once, they do not happen now. They mean rather that God does similar things to-day. The olden miracles are intended to give the present generation the certainty that God can and actually does manifest His great power to-day even as then. Especially Deutero-Isaiah, even though he nowhere uses the word miracle, is intent on proving by the deeds of God in creation and in history that He still has just as much power as ever. If therefore God is often described as 'the God who doeth wondrous things' (Ps. ix. 1, xl. 5, xcvi. 3, xcviii. 1, cv. 5; Isa. xxv. 1), the meaning, it is certain, is not that miracles are limited to definite epochs of redemptive history; quite clearly it is rather that, as God did miracles in the olden time, so He does them in the present, and so too He will

do them in the future. For He is always the living God. *Hence the artificial theory of many writers, according to which miracles, or at least a special class of miracles, are confined to the decisive events in the history of redemption, has no support whatever in the Old Testament.*

Living piety will join psalmist and prophet in praising the God 'who doeth great things unto us and to all the ends of the earth' (cf. Job v. 9).

Alongside of the redeeming works of history the Old Testament places as most prominent the miracles of creation (Job v. 9 ff., ix. 5 ff.; Jer. xxxii. 16 ff.; Isa. xl. 26 ff.; Ps. xxxiii. 6, lxxiv. 12 ff., civ.). In these passages also the creative acts of God are in no sense regarded as events belonging to the far distant past. On the contrary, the Old Testament contemplates with a deep religious faith the great creative miracles which still happen 'as glorious as on the first day.'

The most usual feature of miracles, however, is that they are rare and extraordinary occurrences. So with the plagues of Egypt (Exod. vii.-xii.), and the marvellous feeding of the people with manna and quails (Exod. xvi.). Fire falls from heaven, or comes forth out of the rock and devours the

sacrifice (Judges vi. 21; 1 Kings xviii. 38). Many miracle-stories might be adduced here from the Old and New Testaments.

This class of miracles passes now and then into incidents which strike us as unnatural.[17] For example, Sarah bears a son when she is already ninety years old (Gen. xvii. 17, xviii. 11, xxi. 2 f.). Aaron's rod that blossomed (Num. xvii.), the changing of the rod into a serpent, tried successfully alike by Moses and the Egyptian sorcerers (Exod. iv. 7), the speaking of Balaam's ass (Num. xxii.), the standing still of the sun (Josh. x.), the index that went backward on the dial (2 Kings xx. 11), are examples. They were undoubtedly considered to be possible. What gave them their place in the tradition was the feeling that the more palpably God's working manifests itself, the more certainly is He known to be really at work.

If, then, we are to classify according to our conceptions, we may distinguish a threefold graded idea of miracle in the Old Testament: events which are ordinary, or rare, or unnatural, in all of which God's working is clearly seen. At the same time these three stages are in no way explicitly marked off from each other.

They pass over into each other. In general, then, we may say: Miracles, according to the Old Testament, are mighty deeds of God, revealing the character of His working in the world.

As nature is never made independent of God, the transition from His ordinary to His extraordinary works and ways is easy.

The modern conception of nature as a self-enclosed system, controlled by strict laws, and directing itself by a purely immanent order, is entirely lacking both in the Old Testament and the New. There, nature is completely under the control of the Divine will. And in my judgment, this is a view which holds true even for us to-day.[18] For even if we have a stricter conception of natural law, yet nature as a whole is ultimately as inscrutable for us as for the ancients. Many ideas as to natural forces have been modified. We no longer suppose that the winds lie stored in chambers, or that the sun goes forth from his habitation adorned as a bridegroom. But to imagine that nature can really be explained by studying it from the point of view of 'natural law' is a delusion. Nature is no closed system proceeding in

accordance with immanent rules; we assume closed systems in this field solely for the purposes of simpler calculation. The truth rather is that nature is inscrutable; it is uncompleted and ever developing anew, open to influences from the human spirit, pervaded and controlled by God. And religious faith will always trace it up to the will of God, will always see in its events the operation of God. It is only in regard to the range of the possible and the actual that our ideas have changed.

Miracles of the third class—the unnatural—did not really happen as they are related. Nevertheless, for true faith in God it is an assured conviction that He realises His will within nature, and by means of it. Nay more, if we conceived nature as a closed system confronting God, we should have to speak of a violation of its laws. Similarly, we should have to speak of a breach of the causal nexus of the world, if this nexus were a fixed circle or an iron chain. But these assumptions are false. Hence it is sufficient to speak simply of a Divine working, by which Almighty God actualises His purpose within the processes of nature.

At the same time, we should not exaggerate the difference between modern and ancient thought. For the Israelite himself had an impression of the regularity of the natural order, even if he had not explicitly elaborated the conception of 'nature.' He too was aware that the movements of the heavenly bodies or the growth of plants go on according to rule. Nature, however, is absolutely dependent on God, and therefore its laws are never conceived as independent laws. The expression 'law' has here kept its original significance—an ordinance or command of God. Hence God stands completely free, in no sense limited by nature. He created it, and at every moment it is at His free disposal. He strikes in and employs natural forces for His redeeming purpose. Yet so powerful is the impression of the cosmic order that the steadfastness of nature, the unvarying succession of day and night, is represented as something utterly fixed, with the stability of rock. And when the covenant of God with His people is regarded as resting on an inviolable Divine promise, it is said of it that it stands firm like the ordinances of heaven and earth or as

the change of day and night (Jer. xxxiii. 25; cf. Gen. viii. 22).

We find even the idea of an inviolable law in Ps. cxlviii. 6; חָק־נָתַן וְלֹא יַעֲבוֹר; God has given a law, and will not transgress it.

But just as there are rare, striking, and inexplicable natural phenomena, so there are also extraordinary manifestations of Divine power. It is upon the command of God that the regular course of things reposes. Hence it is intelligible that at any time God can give special and unusual injunctions for the realisation of His plans. He may send special plagues, may strike the enemy with blindness, may visit His people whether to punish or to deliver them. And if tradition occasionally heightens the miracle (as, for instance, in Josh. iii., vi., x. 12 f.), and tells us of the water of Jordan standing upright, or of the sun standing still, yet in these cases an Israelite did not draw the inference we must draw—viz. that the order of nature is being displaced to make room for an event which is really unnatural. No Israelite ever formed the idea of 'the abrogation of the laws of nature,' or of the violation of the cosmic order. It was understood that God had

resorted to special measures; but the question was not raised whether these unusual events repeal the Divine order perceptible at other times.

The omnipotence of God is unlimited. No external power confronts Him. 'Is anything too hard for the Lord?' is the question asked in Gen. xviii. 14 and Jer. xxxii. 27. But God's omnipotence is at the service of His redeeming purpose; hence the function of miracles is to accomplish His plan of salvation for His people.

To the prophets it was given to proclaim beforehand the great deeds of God, and even, in part, themselves to work miracles in God's power. Extraordinary deeds are related especially of Moses, Elijah, and Elisha, which are still further heightened in tradition.

To sum up our results, it is clear that in the Old Testament we find the religious conception of miracle: miracles, that is, are striking occurrences which make on the believing mind the impression that the living God is present and manifestly active. They happen not in narrowly limited periods of history, but at all times. Their reality is felt wherever believing men see

the power of God. That the miracles of redeeming history have a special prominence is explained by the fact that the decisive events connected with the rise of Israel as a nation and the acts of great men of God were fitted to make a peculiarly deep impression on the soul. We see, moreover, that occasionally miraculous events have been exaggerated into the unnatural and the contra-natural by later reporters. Were we to take these later narratives as our basis, the modern man might well be led to think that miracles are events contrary to nature. But there is no trace of this idea in the Old Testament itself.

The New Testament conception of miracle is not essentially different from that of the Old Testament, except that the conception is invariably applied to extraordinary events. Thus in John x. 41 we read that 'John did no sign.' Here the conversion of men by his preaching is not included under the idea of *σημεῖον*.

Jesus certainly had an absolute faith that God could work, and actually did work, miracles through Him, and also that His disciples could drive out demons and heal the

sick in the power of God.[19] It is plain that the energy of Jesus' faith recognises no outward limits to God's miraculous power. Faith can remove mountains (Mark xi. 23); God can answer Jesus' prayer by sending more than twelve legions of angels to defend the Messiah (Matt. xxvi. 53). The words *πάντα δυνατά σοι* (Mark xiv. 36) are certainly most seriously meant; there are no possible limits to them in a nature confronting God, but only in the Divine will itself. The elements, the winds and the waves, must ever obey God's word of command. Jesus is sure that God has delivered to Him 'all things' necessary for the execution of His purpose (Matt. xi. 27). Hence great acts of power (Matt. xi. 20) likewise form a part of the work He has to do. Whatever our conclusions as to the historicity of particular miracles, such as the raisings of the dead and the feeding of the multitude, it is certain that Jesus looked to God for amazing things, and that in this faith He was also granted stupendous experiences.

Clearly an unlimited faith in miracle is in peril of losing itself in the fantastic. But the Synoptic narratives show just here, in the most

perspicuous manner, that Jesus was quite aware of this danger and perfectly overcame it. He would not legitimise His mission, like Moses, by miracles of display before the people. Such thoughts—perhaps suggested by such narratives as those of Exod. iv.—He repudiates as diabolical temptations (Matt. iv. 5-7). In the same way He resists the demand of the people that He should give a sign from heaven as the attestation of His mission (Matt. xvi. 1, xii. 38, 39 ; Luke xi. 29-32). The limit to miracle does not lie anywhere outside God in a power that confines Him and hems Him in, but exclusively in His own will. The popular craving for miracle—then, as always, so easily inflamed — Jesus withstood successfully. The commands of Jesus that this or that miracle of healing should not be reported widely (Mark i. 44, iii. 12, v. 43, vii. 36), of themselves show that Jesus recognised the danger of His being marvelled at and resorted to simply as a wonder-worker, and that His preaching might be contemned in contrast to deeds thus externally striking.

The miracles of Jesus are wholly subservient to His activity as Saviour. They are a special

means used in His care for souls; a means enabling Him to get nearer to many a human heart. Hence they have no independent significance; they form part of the texture of His vocation; they are modes in which the Divine power working in Him finds expression. Always the supreme aim of miracle is to open up the way to God for human hearts. Therefore it is that Jesus can do no mighty work when hearts are closed against Him (Matt. vi. 5). Similarly He declines to work or to pray for miracles on His own behalf (Matt. iv. 3, 4), though He is convinced of their possibility. When He receives no miraculous aid He acquiesces (Mark xiv. 36), for He is persuaded that He can live by God's word and God's spirit.

Hence it is misleading to say, with Soltau,[20] that 'Jesus did not claim for Himself the power to work miracles, but regarded them rather as the marvellous acts of God.' 'However astonishing they may have been for His mind, He knew that they were not His own doing, but must be regarded as the results of the one great Divine miracle—the establishment by God of His kingdom in the hearts of men.' This contrast between His own working and the working

of God was certainly not felt by Jesus; for He was persuaded that all things were delivered unto Him of God, that He did what He heard of the Father, and that in Him God's kingdom is come near to men. He does not make His own Person of so little account in miracle as Soltau does when he writes: 'Not the active intrusion of a miracle-worker, but rather the believing prayer of those who seek healing is the power which alone can lead to genuine cure.' If this were so, Jesus would not have spent so much labour on His healing activities. He would then have been able simply to cry to the ailing, 'Turn your hearts to God and pray to Him, and He will give you the kingdom, and also, if it be His will, make you whole again.' But the Gospels give us a very different picture. Jesus goes to the sick and suffering. As Titius has brought out admirably, His healing activities call for much time and labour and personal strain.

Miraculous power was by no means an endowment of Jesus only. On the contrary, the writers of the New Testament are convinced that others than Jesus did miracles in the power of God. In the Acts of the Apostles miracles are

recorded which were done by the apostles also, or happened to them: healings, raisings of the dead, deliverances. Many of the stories have been developed by tradition, the supernatural aspect being involuntarily presented with a heightened tone of colour. Yet clearly the New Testament miracles cannot all be the product of poetic fancy. Paul is convinced that miracles have been wrought by him in Corinth (2 Cor. xii. 12); he knows that supernatural powers of healing have been bestowed on many members of the Corinthian Church (1 Cor. xii. 28 f.). In Rom. xv. 18 Paul says that through him signs and wonders have been done, in the power of the Holy Ghost. Under these miracles we shall have to embrace striking conversions and extraordinary manifestations of Jesus' spiritual power in the Gentile-Christian Churches, as well as speaking with tongues. No one disputes that occurrences of this sort actually took place. What many dispute, however, is whether these occurrences are to be called 'miracles' in the specific sense.

According to a widely held view, miracles are a special gift bestowed by God upon the apostolic age. In that age, it is said, miracles

were necessary; later, it was possible to dispense with them. History is altogether opposed to this theory. Origen, for example, appeals to the fact that miracles of the kind wrought by Jesus, such as the expulsion of demons and the healing of the sick, were being done in his own time by men who walked in Jesus' footsteps; even to-day, he writes, the Christians drive out devils, and put all kinds of sickness to flight. They see future things beforehand when it pleases the Logos to illuminate their mind (*adv. Celsum*, I. xlvi.; cf. I. ii., vi.; III. xxiv. ff.). So that Origen is absolutely convinced that the miracles occurring in his own time are similar to those of Scripture.

If, then, we shape our religious language by the Bible, we have good ground for employing the term 'miracle' to denote all striking events, in which the working of God confronts us in a specially clear manner.

Does the sense of the Old or the New Testament permit us to speak of 'the argument from miracles'?[21] It certainly does not mean that a striking fact is simply in virtue of its singularity a convincing proof of the Divine working.

In and with the unusualness of the fact there must also come to view the special *character* of God's working.

In the Old Testament miracles are so heightened in certain passages that it is felt they must persuade even unbelievers by the manner of their happening (cf. Exod. iv. and vii.). The more realistically they are represented, the more easily they come to be viewed as significant purely on account of their remarkableness, quite apart from their religious meaning. On the other hand, as early as Deut. xiii. 1-6, we find the truth clearly expressed that an ever so striking occurrence — even when it must be regarded as a 'miracle'—is, nevertheless, no infallible evidence of God's working. For in that passage it is held as conceivable that even a false prophet may do miracles. What really counts in and by itself is obedience to Jehovah. That needs no support from external evidence. The New Testament also has miracles to tell of, which the antichrist (ὁ ἄνομος) will do, so as to seduce many (2 Thess. ii. 8 f.).

Accordingly, miracle never can be so isolated that its mere happening constitutes, merely in

virtue of its unusualness, a proof of the Divine operation.

Is the 'argument from miracle' found in the New Testament? Jesus Himself refers the messengers of John the Baptist to His works (Matt. xi. 2-5). And His works are healings and the preaching of the Gospel. Here miracles are not isolated; they come into view connectedly as integral elements in His vocation as a whole. What legitimates Jesus as the sent of God is not simply that He does striking things; it is the content of His work that speaks for Him. So also in Matt. xii. 28; the cases of demon-expulsion are proof that the kingdom of God is present. In Mark ii. 10 f. the two sides move rather more apart; there, the healing of the paralytic is the proof that Jesus has power to forgive sins. In the Gospel of John also we find a series of passages which represent miracles as an integral element in Jesus' whole saving work. It is a question whether we are properly to understand by ἔργα only His miracles or His saving work in its entirety. What is certain is that in any case the ἔργα embrace the miracles. Beth[22] supposes that in passages like John x. 38 and

xiv. 11, Jesus' miraculous works are not referred to in the first instance, but the opposite seems to result from the contrast between words and works: 'If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not Me, believe My works.' What reason could the evangelist have for relating a full selection of miracles, if for his mind these did not in the first instance belong to those works of Jesus with which God had commissioned Him? Similarly, Jesus says to His disciples (John xiv. 11): 'If ye believe Me not, yet believe for the very works' sake (namely, that I am in the Father and the Father in Me).' So, too, in John ii. 11 it is mentioned as the effect of Jesus' first sign, that His disciples believed on Him. And again in ii. 23: 'Many believed on His name, beholding His signs which He did.' In vii. 31 we have an argument from the signs to Jesus' Messiahship: 'Of the multitude many believed on Him, and they said, When the Messiah shall come, will He do more signs than those which this man hath done?' In the same way, according to xi. 15 and xi. 42, the miracle of Lazarus had significance for the faith of the disciples and of the

people. Thus we cannot agree with Beth [23] that in the Gospel of John the miracles of Jesus had no power to awaken faith, but could only strengthen a faith already present. He is right only in the point that the miracles of Jesus had no faith-awakening power merely in virtue of their striking character. The personality working in them always comes into view as well, the whole manner in which Christ acts and reveals God.

That the strikingness of the act is not in view merely by itself is clearly shown by the fact that, alike in the Synoptics and in the Gospel of John, Jesus always declines to work a miracle when a demand is made for one (Matt. xii. 39, xvi. 4 ; John vi. 30). No miracle was sufficiently realistic for the multitude ; a still more dazzling sign was demanded of Jesus by way of attestation. Suggestions of this kind Jesus simply puts aside. We may conjecture that the feeding of the crowd in John vi. 5-14 cannot have been so glaring a miracle if immediately after it was over the demand could be raised for a sign. In any case it was not the opinion of Jesus that a striking miraculous event, solely by its extraordinary character,

had power to convince and awaken faith, otherwise He would have prayed God for an attesting sign. Words pointing in the same direction are the reproach (John iv. 48 and xx. 29): 'Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe,' and 'Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.'

Christian faith, therefore, must discard the older argument from miracle. That is to say, to a man who is himself a stranger to the life of faith I cannot *first* undertake to prove that there are undeniable miracles sufficient to evoke his faith. Catholic theology is accustomed to put miracles among the external evidences of the truths of Christianity.[24] But in point of fact belief in miracle arises only in the heart which has first been touched by the revelation of God. Previous to that, it is quite possible that striking events may be viewed as having taken place, but they have no significance for personal faith. But if not, then the modern mind tends to regard them either as not real or as not important.

On the other hand, I can speak of an argument from miracle in this sense, that the man who experiences an act Divinely wrought, *i.e.* a

miracle, receives in and with this experience an assured certainty of God. In that case, however, evidential force attaches not to the mere fact that something striking has occurred, but to the mode in which thereby God has come to touch us.

CHAPTER III

THE CONCEPTION OF MIRACLE IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY

It was not till after Augustine that Biblical miracles were felt as something remote and strange, events which no longer happened. Men like Tertullian, Justin, and Origen, on the other hand, appeal to the fact that things occur in their own time similar in kind to those told of in the miraculous narratives of Scripture. Expulsions of demons and supernatural healings are mentioned as still taking place.

The methods of God's working in the past and in the present are not separated by a chasm. The proof of Christianity by miracle, in the sense that the strikingness of the event has *per se* convincing power, has, on the whole, been given up. As men in general (until the eighteenth century) believed in diabolical miracles, the merely striking character of an event could not be taken as in itself convincing. Tertullian describes to us most vividly his own

beliefs as to diabolical operations.[1] Demons, he holds, are *substantiae spirituales*, with the power of being everywhere at a single moment. They corrupt the souls of men, bring sicknesses to bodies, cause mental disturbances, and destroy in the seed both fruit and field-crops. They seduce men to idolatry. A demon dwelt in Socrates; demons produce oracles such as those of Delphi. The gods served by the heathen are demons, and they take pleasure in the sacrifices offered to them; they hear the prophecies of God contained in the Scriptures and in this way gain a knowledge of the future, and then act as if they had this knowledge of themselves. But demons are subject to Christians, for they flee when adjured in the name of Christ.

So long as demonic miracles are considered possible, the 'argument from miracle' can have no force. Origen, it is true, adduces 'the argument of the Spirit and of power' from fulfilled prophecies and the miracles which Christ wrought, and which in his own time were still done by Christians in Christ's name.[2] He professes to have seen many who were delivered from *χαλεπῶν συμπτωμάτων καὶ ἐκστά-*

σεων καὶ μανιῶν καὶ ἄλλων μυρίων, ἅπερ οὔτ' ἄνθρωποι οὔτε δαίμονες ἐθεράπευσαν.[3] Yet when heathens point to miracles alleged to have been wrought by Aesculapius, he will not deny that there is a demon called Aesculapius, possessed of healing power. At this point he makes the remarkable admission that in and by itself the gift of working miracles or of prophecy is morally indifferent; these gifts, he maintains, are not in themselves infallible evidences of Divinity. He demands proof that those who were healed by Aesculapius also became morally virtuous. This, he says, shows clearly the difference between heathen miracles and those of Jesus. He does not credit all miracles related by heathen writers; not, for example, all miracles associated with Aesculapius,[4] or all those narrated of Aristeas by Pindar and Herodotus.[5] Nor does he deny all heathen miracles; but puts uniformly the test question whether these miracles have made the human race better,[6] and whether the miracle-workers lived a morally pure life. This he denies of the life of Antinous, the favourite of Hadrian, in whose city, Antinopolis, miracles were reported to have taken place

after his death. And he further expresses the opinion that these may be explained by Egyptian jugglery. How differently does the moral sublimity of Jesus shine in His wondrous deeds! And thus the argument from miracle, which at first had only an isolated significance, is seen to have force solely in connection with the activity of Jesus as a whole. Origen, too, is convinced that though he could recount from his own time many cases of miraculous healing in the name of Jesus, the heathen would decline to believe them. Thus even to his mind it becomes clear that miracles have, merely by themselves, no power to convince.

Neither in the literature of the Bible, nor in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers and the Apologists, nor yet in the older Church Fathers, do we find any attempt to define the conception of miracle scientifically, or to ascertain its relations to the conception of nature or the natural order. It is only when Biblical miracles are felt as remote and strange—things which it is thought must be vindicated—that principles of explanation come to be put forward. Augustine first took up the problem of a

theoretical conception. In this point also he exercised a determining influence on the whole of Catholic theology, partly, too, on Protestant theology and philosophy. In Leibnitz himself, nay even in Schleiermacher, we find the after-effects of Augustine's thought, as also in theologians of to-day.

He formulates the problem in these terms: Are miracles contrary to nature? And he answers: No; they are only contrary to nature so far as known to us, but not to nature itself, for what is really contrary to nature, and what in accordance with it, it is impossible for us men to know.[7]

So that Augustine thus early recognised the difficulty inherent in the conception of nature. We cannot survey nature as a whole. We cannot measure the hidden possibilities it may contain. Hence the question whether this or that is in harmony with nature, or in contradiction, is a question which cannot always be determined, since it is only to the smallest portion of nature that our knowledge extends. Just as little as the writers of the Bible does Augustine oppose the conception of nature to the thought of God. Nature is for him no

closed system, confronting God; rather it is a general name for all that which happens in accordance with Divine volition.

The valuable element in Augustine's discussion of miracle is the principle that when we speak of 'natural' and 'supernatural,' we are making a purely subjective distinction; for God what we call 'natural' process and what we call miraculous are equally natural. If it be proposed to take as a mark of miracles that they cannot be accounted for by natural causes, Augustine would add that neither can we assign any ground why ordinary facts in nature are exactly as we find them to be.[8] As an example, he points out that we can assign no reason why fig-seeds are so small.[9]

Starting then with this correct principle, Augustine would vindicate all Biblical miracles as being 'not contrary to nature.' Like every one until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, he regarded all the miracles of Scripture, without exception or qualification, as having taken place exactly as they are reported.[10] He makes, indeed, the untenable assertion that none of the miracles are contrary to nature, but only to the usual course of

nature. Not even the birth of Jesus from a virgin *utero clauso*, or the passage of the risen Lord through closed doors, was contrary to nature.[11] If it be said that for such things no explanation can be given, the answer of Augustine is that no explanation can be given even for common natural phenomena.

In Augustine we also find a theory still employed by certain modern writers—the theory of accelerated natural processes, serving to explain the miracle at the marriage of Cana.[12] Nay more; even the miracle which figures in his own pages and in the Scholastic writers as the instance *par excellence* of dialectic applied to this subject—the turning of Moses' rod into a serpent—he interprets as a case of accelerated natural process. (The common hypothesis was that in rotting wood 'quite natural serpents might originate.'[13] So, it was held, in this case a process gradual at other times took place instantaneously.)

Another unknown Augustine of the seventh century takes up the same fruitless problem, in a treatise *de mirabilibus Sanctae Scripturae*.[14] He endeavours to prove regarding all Biblical miracles that they happened, not *contra*

naturam, but only contrary to the usual course of nature.

A special discussion is devoted by Augustine to the diabolic and magical miracles, which were treated of in the Middle Ages, and by Protestant writers well into the eighteenth century, but have more and more disappeared from the argument within the last hundred years. In his opinion even demons can work miracles, but they can only use natural forces created by God; they cannot produce new forces. These ideas likewise became later an heirloom of the Scholastic and the older Protestant theology. In particular here also the narrative — viewed as real history — according to which the Egyptian magicians turned their rods into serpents, challenged theological explanation. This fact too was considered, *e.g.* by Albertus Magnus and his followers, as no *miraculum*, but only a *mirabile*.[15]

To how great an extent these 'diabolical miracles' occupied theology may be seen from the fulness with which they were debated till far into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as well as from the frightful practical consequences for which belief in witches was

responsible, from the fourteenth century on to the eighteenth.

Calvin, for example, expresses his conviction that 'evil witchcraft' is a fact. Yet in discussing the rods of the Egyptian magicians he prefers to think 'that these deceivers played their tricks on the eyes of the spectators, rather than that they accomplished anything real.' [16]

Augustine now proceeds to argue further that God has enclosed *semina occulta* in things.[17] These contain the hidden possibilities of the world. At the same time, however, God possesses hidden causes, which He has not placed in created things, but reserved to His own will.[18] When these come into operation, they do not act against the order inherent in the world, for God cannot contradict Himself; and whether particular events ought to be ascribed to the *semina occulta* present in the world, or to causes hidden in God, is always a disputable point. He traces Biblical miracles to the *semina occulta*, so that they were bound by necessity to emerge at the appointed time. But the works of Providence, by which God rules the world,[19] he derives rather from causes hidden in God, as he does also the mystery of

grace, whereby sinners are saved. An example used by Augustine makes this clearer.[20] In youth the body contains the cause of its growing old in due time; yet all that can be said to be certainly present in the youthful body is the *possibility* of its growing old. The necessity of its growing old lies rather perhaps in the causes present in the world, or perhaps in God Himself. Hezekiah, for example (cf. Isa. xxxviii. 1 ff.), in virtue of *inferioribus causis*, was bound to die. But in virtue of causes which God had hidden in His own will and foresight, he was to die later. For God foresaw his prayer, and had resolved to hear it.

Thus Augustine differentiates two classes of events: those which arise from causes inherent in the world, and those which are derivable from reasons hid in God. Even the first class is traceable to God, inasmuch as He is Creator of the world. We may certainly say that these acute distinctions do give expression to God's living rule of things, His immanence and His transcendence. For if all events were to flow from *semina* inherent in the world, the resulting scheme of things would be Deistic. The world would then be like an

organism called into life by God, unfolding itself thenceforward by immanent powers; or like an artificial automaton, which held all future events already pre-formed within itself. Therefore Augustine assumes other causes, besides those seeds present in the world—causes not in the world, but hidden in God Himself.

Nevertheless, this distinction of two kinds of Divine works, while most ably suited to the understanding, is entirely unsuccessful. We cannot possibly hold the two things apart. Rather in all the works of Divine omnipotence we must combine the two aspects: God is *both* immanent and transcendent. He brings His transcendent being to expression in actions immanent within the world. Augustine's distinction paved the way for the error which prevailed from the days of Scholasticism till those of modern theology, as exemplified in Biedermann. The ideas by which the understanding seeks to interpret the immanent cosmic order are inserted, as intermediaries of Divine government, between God and the world.

Then people either say: God has reserved to Himself extraordinary 'supernatural' acts, outside this usual order. This was the view of

mediæval Scholasticism and Protestant orthodoxy. Or they attempt to prove that the usual order of the world is so perfect and so adequate that no 'extra' Divine works, no miracles in the strict sense, are required for realisation of the Divine will. Both solutions are mistaken. For conceptions of law and causality, especially when drawn from natural science, are all totally unfit to represent the special character of the Divine working.

We can trace back to Augustine's arguments the attempts made by Scholastic writers—with the help of excessively minute distinctions—to expound the relations of miracle and nature as well as to exhibit miracle in its different kinds. Albertus Magnus spent the labour of acute investigation on these problems.[21] He distinguishes *miracula* and *mirabilia*. *Mirabilia* are events which do not in principle go beyond the capacities of nature, even though they represent a functioning of the forces of nature in extraordinary ways. *Miracula*, on the other hand, are events not producible by nature on any terms. Demons and magicians, in his judgment, may quite well do *mirabilia*, but God alone can do *miracula*. The dictum of

Augustine that miracles are not *contra naturam* is repeated; but it is held to be true only so far as we understand by 'nature' that character which God gave to things by eternal ordinance; so far, on the contrary, as by 'nature' we understand the usual course of things, miracles are partly *contra*, partly *supra*, and partly *praeter naturam*.

Albertus Magnus had an exceedingly strong influence on Thomas Aquinas.[22] Aquinas too divides the operations of God into two classes: those which correspond to the usual order of things, and those which take place *praeter ordinem naturae*. This idea of miracle was later accepted by both the Lutheran and the Reformed theology, and thus dominated thought for centuries. Here the Aristotelian philosophy is made the foundation of theology. God, on this view, is the *primum agens*, working in all things. On the one hand He works in the natural course of events, for as *causa prima* He acts upon the *causae secundae*, and brings about each particular event in accordance with the order imposed on them. As in Aristotle, nature is viewed as a graded system. Higher and more comprehensive spheres of being are

differentiated from lower and dependent spheres. The supreme cause works through the mediation of the *causae secundae*, being thus active in all that happens in the universe.

From this ordinary working of God His extraordinary working was distinguished. The latter is exemplified when God directly produces an effect without the mediation of the *causae secundae* or the order of nature as just described. Indeed, Thomas grades miracles according to the measure in which the natural order is transgressed. Like Albertus, he differentiates here subjective miracles, transcending the order of nature as we know it, from objective miracles, which really transcend the order of nature as a whole. He holds that even angels and demons can do miracles; but for him these are not miracles properly; for while angels and demons can doubtless make an extraordinary use of forces present in nature, they cannot create anything new. Therefore in the fullest sense miracles are possible for God alone.

This conception of Thomas has had an immense influence. In after times it is mentioned approvingly, Thomas being often expressly cited; as, for example, by Musaeus.[23]

The conceptions of Wigand,[24] Alstedt,[25] Gerhard,[26] etc., are similar. Buddeus defines still more sharply.[27] He puts miracles in a yet more decisive opposition to the idea of nature: *per miracula enim ordo naturae tollitur.* Miracles are acts of God, *quibus naturae leges revera suspenduntur.*

Very different are Luther's statements on the subject. In a sermon for Ascensiontide on the concluding verses of the Gospel of Mark, he says that the external miracles, of which Christ's promise here speaks, are quite trivial and all but childish marvels compared with the true and high miracles which Christ is doing in Christendom incessantly, when by His Word He works faith and destroys the kingdom of the devil.[28] These are the great miracles—that the terrors of the devil, of death, and of sin should be conquered in us. The true miracle is faith.[29]

Thus there breaks forth in Luther the native language of religion. In his view, all attempts fail to define miracles logically or to form for them a precise conception. In Melanchthon's *Loci* and in Calvin's *Institutio religionis christianae* we are still clear of the fruitless

definitions of Scholasticism. It was their successors who first revived Scholastic notions.

'So we believe,' said Luther, 'that all Christ's words and works are pure miracles. Therefore in Isa. ix. 6 His name is called Wonderful. But we leave the Gospels and the apostles free to call miraculous what they will.' [30]

To external miracles of sense Luther attaches but slight importance. For heathen men and unbelievers, it is true, there must be outward signs, which can be seen with the eye and grasped with the hand. But Christians must have far higher heavenly signs—the Word of God and its effects. Hence it is no wonder that outward signs have ceased. In them God acts as if one should throw apples and pears to children. The inward miracles done by Christ when He overcomes a man's sin, are invisible to the godless world. The world demands other, external miracles, but does not receive them.[31] As for the disciples, they did not display signs in every place, but everywhere they preached the Word of God. Were it necessary, however, disciples would do miracles again even to-day. But no one should under-

take to work miraculous signs unless in case of urgent need.[32]

In this respect also Luther went back to the simple thoughts of Scripture, that he declares creation to be a great miracle, and one we cannot understand. God has done miracles, does them still to-day and will continue to do them, but men take no heed.[33]

It is true that here and there we come upon the thought that God of olden time used miracles to confirm teaching.[34] But this confirmation in Bible times was not to be given for ever or universally. Yet at the same time Luther is quite clear that such corroboration can never be convincing. 'The Gospel does not fail or lie; but miracles may utterly deceive, as Paul declares (2 Thess. ii. 9) that the antichrist is to deal in false signs, so as to seduce the very elect (Matt. xxiv. 24). For signs must serve and follow the Word, not the Word signs.'[35] Luther agrees with his age in holding diabolical miracles to be facts. And he is of opinion that men may enter into a compact with the devil.[36]

From Calvin I quote merely these words: 'Those whom the devil misuses in his unhappy service for the seducing of the poor people, he

deceives by all kinds of juggling tricks, so that they blindly rush on whatsoever he bids them do. Thus it may happen that, stung to wild frenzy, they bewitch not only children, but also other people's cattle; for the devil, kindling in them the longing, bestows on them also the power. In ascertaining whether criminal sorcery of this sort has been practised, we have not to ask whether they have assumed a strange form, or whether they have only concealed themselves by all kinds of deceptive veils, so apparently changing; it is more than enough if they have voluntarily given themselves up to the devil to work his evil deeds. But we should not do Satan the honour of thinking that he can really create anything; for there is only one Creator of all things. Miracles done by the devil we ought to regard merely as unsubstantial phantasms. Even if they have ofttimes been so marvellous as to outstrip all probability, yet we should consider that it is not difficult for the Father of Darkness in this fashion to blind weak eyes, or still better, to play tricks on the utterly sightless.'[37] Yet Calvin adds that only those who voluntarily let themselves be entangled of the devil come under

his power. But the Word of God is mightier far than all the devil's deceptions; therefore what believers have to do with is not the devil, but the providence of God.

Calvin, we find, no more than Luther or Melanchthon sets up a special conception of miracle. The miraculous was not as yet a problem. Religious feeling of itself decided what a miracle was. Biblical miracles had not yet been attacked by historical criticism; the simple fact of their being recorded was felt to guarantee their truth.

But from the seventeenth century onwards important changes and readjustments took place in men's belief as to the supernatural. These changes can be detected first of all in the conception of what at the present day is considered possible; and gradually from this point the criticism of scientific history has reached out to question many miracles of the past. The identity of the world-process in the past and the present became clear. Earlier still, as a consequence of modern natural science, an altered idea of nature emerged, and led either to modifications of the conception of miracle or its rejection.

And thus 'miracle,' which, till then, had without controversy been ranked as possible both in the past and the present, was transformed into a most baffling problem. The negative treatment of the subject had in it many elements of truth, never again to be parted with; as, for instance, the indubitable principle that neither the science of nature nor that of history can be expected to allow for miracle. First of all, natural science excluded miracles of the present from its province; but, as regards the beginning of the world-process, it made the concession to the supernatural that God must have given the original 'impulse' to cosmic movement.[38] But gradually, and indeed quite rightly, men of science have ceased to allow for this initial miracle. It is *ultra vires* for natural science to reckon with the conception of God, whether positively or negatively. Frequently, however, adherence to this perfectly true principle has led to the unwitting error of supposing that the conceptions of natural science can be laid down as the basis of a complete view of the world. And this leads to the dictum: Miracles do not happen, for natural science cannot allow for them.

Wherever men hold this language, it is because they have introduced into the conception of God ideas of law borrowed from natural science. That which can be ascertained on the lines of science is made co-terminous with the actual, or even the possible for God.

Similarly, ever since Hume's criticism of miracles [39] it has been clear that the science of history cannot allow for miracle; it cannot admit that there are events which are outside analogy with ordinary experience. In this sense, it is obliged to deny miracle. And the defence of miracles is on wholly wrong lines which would attempt to force science or history to recognise them. On the other hand, the inference we often hear drawn is false: Give up miracles altogether; clear your minds of the idea; for the modern mind it is the chief obstacle. Proclaim, it is said, a Christianity free from miracle, then you will succeed. But to mutilate Christianity thus would be to destroy its very heart; and the result would be a religion of the mere rational understanding, tame and flat.

From this conflict and difficulty we are delivered, first of all, by Schleiermacher's

principle of the special character of religious experience. Miracle consists in the religious interpretation of events *sub specie aeternitatis*; the transcendent being of God operates in each single fact. If this 'explanation' is not appearance, but objective reality, we are compelled to seek for ideas which shall express, on the cognitive side, the working of what is transcendent in the sphere of the sensible and visible. And for this no idea but that of miracle is available.

As regards miracles in the present, it was the horrors of prosecutions for witchcraft that in the first place led Spee,[40] Thomasius,[41] and Becker[42] to deny the actuality of human compacts with the devil. Some opposition was at first encountered, but in a few decades this destructive criticism of the old superstition had its effect. The result was that Semler declared the demon-possessed in the New Testament to be really insane.[43] To begin with he was attacked vehemently for this. But gradually the analogy of mental diseases as known to us to-day with those described in the New Testament became so clear as to be universally acknowledged.

Spinoza had previously made it a quite just

point of criticism against the common Scholastic idea of miracle, that according to it the power of God and the power of nature are two quite separate things.[44] Hence the alternative—either God works, or nature. He is equally right in holding that nothing happens in nature which violates natural law. In his judgment, the word 'miracle' has meaning only in reference to human insight, and denotes simply an event the natural cause of which we cannot explain analogously to some other known fact, or which at least the person cannot so explain who describes or narrates it as miraculous.

He commits the error, however, that, misled by his conceptual realism, he regarded the laws of nature not as mere surveys of natural phenomena from particular points of view, but as objective powers, capable of comprehending in themselves the whole fulness of being. Consequently he identifies the order of nature and the will or providence of God.[45] The result is that justice is not done to the specific nature or to the aims of the Divine working. The Divine working takes on the aspect of an impersonal nature-process; for logical categories, drawn from the

realm of external nature, are used as if capable of expressing the whole of God's sovereign relation to the world. The necessity prevailing in external nature is made an essential attribute of God. Indeed, the 'necessity of the Divine nature' is simply the necessity of the outward world reflected back on God Himself.[46] And as a result, God with equal impersonality works both good and evil, the beautiful and the ugly.[47] Everything follows from the eternal decree of God 'with the same necessity as it follows from the essence of a triangle that its angles are equal to two right angles.'[48] Hence the faith in providence, to which Spinoza's *Ethics* leads up, is Stoic in character, not Christian. He bids us 'await and endure the smiles or frowns of fate with an equal mind.'[49] Since nature asks no questions as to our aims, Spinoza concludes that final causes in general are mere human imaginations.[50] They are no more than subjective opinions. To inquire about ends in nature, he says, is to inquire simply as to the utility of actions for our subjective feeling. Between subjective and objective ends there is no distinction. It is intelligible, then, that the view which reads Spinoza's system as a

naturalistic one should find a foothold in these statements, though in what he says of the intellectual love of God he puts forward mystical ideas of a different cast.

In regard to Biblical miracles his conclusions are as follows. It is beyond doubt, he says, 'that everything related in the Bible took place in a natural manner, and is traceable to God alone, for . . . it is not the business of the Bible to explain things according to their natural causes.'[51] Hence he seeks to explain 'naturally' many Scriptural narratives; so, for instance, the plagues of Egypt. Nowhere does he resort to mythical explanations. But he thinks that the 'imaginative power' of Bible writers contributed to their belief in miracle; in regard, for example, to the standing still of the sun, the ascension of Elijah, or the ideas of a descent of God from heaven. In many cases, personal views were mixed up with real things. At the same time, Spinoza is of opinion that God conversed with Moses speaking in a real voice, with other prophets through imagined voices and forms. He assumes a real and actual communion of Christ with God, spirit with spirit. He accepts the reality of Divine

revelation, but adds: 'I confess, however, that I do not know by what natural laws this took place.' [52]

Consistent development of the principle that the power of nature and the power of God coincide will always lead to naturalism. Spinoza himself says, however: 'By nature here I understand not merely the sensible matter and its forms of movement, but also much else than matter.' [53] And great confusion results from failure on his part to see that this 'much else' cannot be included in 'nature' without remainder. Nature, it is true, reaches far into spiritual life; but at the same time spiritual life transcends the measures of nature, and above all the conception of natural law. Logically, when the conception of natural law is extended to the universe as a whole, the result is to strangle religion—the universe being regarded as completely expressible in terms of natural law; but this step Spinoza does not take because he recognises a real Divine revelation. But his attempt to conceive of Divine revelation as answering to an unknown 'law of nature' shows clearly the impossibility of bringing all things under such a scheme as this.

And finally, Spinoza touches on the idea as an abstract possibility that 'if anything should be found in the Bible in regard to which it can be proved irrefragably that it is in contradiction to the laws of nature, or cannot be derived from them, we must hold decidedly that it was interpolated in Holy Scripture by profane hands.' He does not distinguish between the two ideas, 'contradictory to natural law' and 'not derivable from natural law'; and yet they are fundamentally different. The former phrase implies that empirical research must investigate every event from the point of view of law; the latter, that nothing exists in the universe but natural law.

The alternative—believers, or 'the profane' —is characteristic of the age of enlightenment, which looked always for absolute truth or deceit. And yet Spinoza's principle, that we must allow for human opinion, might have convinced him that the alternative is false.

Leibnitz, on the other hand, turns back to the conception of miracle found in Augustine and the Scholastic writers. He presents us with two groups of ideas, never completely harmonised. On the one side are arguments

which recall Augustine. God, when He resolved to create the best of all worlds, included all miracles in the world from the first; thus implicitly decreeing them when He chose this world.[54] Even the prayers and good actions of men already stood before God's mind when He determined on miracles. This pre-determination of the miraculous resembles the Augustinian theory of *semina occulta*, placed by God in the structure of the world. Yet we nowhere encounter the other Augustinian idea, that God in addition has kept certain special causes hidden in His own will. But on the other side we are told that God can dispense His creatures from the laws He prescribed for them. Only the 'eternal truths'—by which Leibnitz means the truths of geometry—are quite immutable; all other laws are subject to the dispensation of Him who made them.[55] Here the ideas of Thomas Aquinas and his followers are adopted. In his correspondence with Clarke, too, Leibnitz clearly intends to distinguish the natural and the supernatural. For him a miracle is that which transcends all natural forces.[56] The two lines of thought are not harmonised; and Clarke points out inconsistencies between

Leibnitz's statements on miracle in his letters and in his other works.[57] Clarke himself, on the other hand, sees more correctly than Leibnitz that what we call natural and supernatural are equally essential for God.[58] The customary we call natural; the unaccustomed, supernatural: but between the two there exists no absolute opposition.

Discussion of miracle, as it has been carried on from Spinoza's time to the present day, oscillates between Thomist and Spinozist ideas. Either the principle of Thomas is defended, with many modifications, that certain events happen by natural order, certain others by extraordinary arrangement; or the thesis of Spinoza is held to, that the usual order is sufficient, perfect, and good. By means of it God realises His will.

The principle of Thomas has against it the fact that we never can differentiate these two classes of events; in its favour is the fact that it keeps us from compressing the government of God in the framework of inadequate ideas.

Theories characterised by Spinozism, or modified Spinozism, have in their favour the fact that they represent the government of God as a

unity. But the ideas of law they employ do not sufficiently express the special character of Divine activity. Each theory is right in its polemical negations, wrong in its counter-positions.

Schleiermacher was the first to set the problem on a new and truer path when he wrote in his *Addresses on Religion*: 'What then is a miracle? Come, tell me, is there a tongue in which it means anything but a sign, an indication? And so all these expressions affirm nothing but the direct relation of a phenomenon to the Infinite, the Universe; but is this to deny that it has not an equally direct relation to the finite, and to nature? Miracle is only the religious name for an event; and any event is a miracle, even the most entirely natural, whensoever it is of such a kind that the religious view of it predominates.' [59]

Here the emotional significance of miracle is clearly expressed; *i.e.* the principle that the term 'miracle' indicates the relation of an event to religious feeling. Nevertheless even in Schleiermacher the old problems presently arise once more. For it is impossible that we should exclude the cognitive aspect of the

matter from religious thought, or simply say dogmatically that so far as the event which is regarded as miraculous comes under the survey of cognition proper, nothing is to be taken into account but its relation to other particular events. For the religious interpretation also includes an element of cognition. So that the old questions usually emerge again, even in Schleiermacher's pages. We must make the separation of the two points of view — the religious and the scientific—fundamental, and agree with Schleiermacher when he says that 'the interests of piety can never demand that we should so conceive a fact as that its dependence on God absolutely excludes its being conditioned by the context of nature.' [60]

At this point, however, we encounter a great temptation. If the interpretation of an event as miraculous has significance primarily for emotion, there is danger lest the strictly cognitive study of the event should take as fundamental the ideas of natural law and causality, ideas only valid in abstraction from religion altogether; and that thus a sharp and exclusive contrast should be set up between the religious and the scientific reading of miracle.

The cognitive solution given by Schleiermacher does, after all, carry over to God's rule conceptions which properly express only the relation of particular facts to other particular facts. Thus he writes : [61]

' Our religious self-consciousness, in virtue of which we put everything that moves and influences us in absolute dependence on God, is simply coincident with the perception that all such things are conditioned and determined by the natural nexus.' What he fails to express here is this, that when we see God working in any given particular event, and thus also in the course of the universe as a whole, we become aware of a quite new and different aspect of things compared with that which is before our minds when we study the processes of the world in their natural uniformities or in their historical connection with other particular events.

It is misleading to say that it is all one whether we take everything from our Heavenly Father's hand as His appointment, or merely acknowledge the cosmic regularity present in all happening, and trace it to the supreme cause, God.

The needed two-fold method of interpretation however, is impossible if knowledge of the world from the point of view of natural law yields the final and supreme sense of things; if natural causality reveals the essence of being. But a critical study of the meaning of natural law and of causality proves that this is not the case. The final meaning and supreme aim of the whole world-process is revealed rather by religious contemplation of the world from the Christian point of view, while the study of process in the light of natural law and causality is adapted only to explain the particular fact in its connection with other facts.

The decisive question regarding the problem of miracle may be formulated thus: Does God introduce into the existing world—the world He created and guides—new factors not deducible from the existing cosmic order, which He also guides? Or has He already created and ordered the world so perfectly that each new state of being is the necessary result of what went before? To accept the latter alternative is to make the world an automaton; for it carries over to the world as a whole the category of necessity, which is valid only for particular

events. It assumes a false conception of cause and effect.

If the world is in living relationship to God, then God is perpetually at work in the world creatively. What would happen to the universe if He withdrew His hand is for us an insoluble question, for the only world we know is a world livingly related to God and His constant guidance. Hence it is impossible to deduce a given state of the universe simply as the necessary consequence of what preceded. In all process there is God's hidden action. And therefore what will happen in the future is not exclusively dependent on that which God has effectuated in the universe previously; on the contrary, we ought perpetually to hope for new, incalculable, and amazing Divine acts.

The contrary view erroneously infers from the immutability of God that in our unchangeable world everything is the inevitable result of the natural nexus which has once been established. Thus the Divine government of the world takes on a rigid and impersonal cast.

Schleiermacher approximates to this conception, when he writes:[62] 'But on the other hand it is hard to understand how omnipotence would

show itself greater in interruptions of the natural nexus than in *the unchangeable course thereof*[63] as originally but also divinely appointed; for, after all, the power to make changes in an appointed order is only an advantage for him who appoints it if he is obliged to make changes — and this, again, can only be due to some imperfection in himself or his work.'

Here we have the alternative put forward: Either God changes the immutable course of things now and again by miracle, or the once established arrangement works itself out inexorably. A third possibility is not admitted. But how if God has simply *not* established an immutable course of things?[64] And in point of fact, each moment of the universe actually contains an inexhaustible fulness of possibilities. Which of these shall be realised is not in the least rigidly determined by the condition of the universe. Thus we gain a view of things quite other than that which results from the alternative—either an immutable process, and Stoical determinism; or mere arbitrary Divine acts, interrupting a well-planned order.

But if the existing world-nexus is taken simply as the means by which God accomplishes His pur-

pose with unbending necessity, we reach a view of things according to which God once set the world in motion, and the world now produces by immanent laws that which He originally put into it.

Logically this would mean that God once generated the world as an organism, which now unfolds with immanent necessity. Intrusions into its organic process would only be disturbing.

In that case the cosmic organism would go on developing exactly as if God had wholly withdrawn from it. Schleiermacher, indeed, is far from this Deistic inference; he lived too intensely and inwardly in an unbroken living sense of personal communion with God. But in his theology he puts the ceaseless dependence of all things on God in this way: God has established an immutable cosmic process, manifested in the rigidly causal connections of the experiential world. This, scientifically, means a view of things in which all future events—sin, redemption, the Person of Jesus—were bound to flow from the initial state of the universe. Sin no less than redemption goes back to God's creative action, though certainly sin is not taken as the independent and specific end of the cosmic development. But God is nevertheless

the 'Author of sin,' though He counteracts it finally by providing a redemption.[65]

But, above all, on this view we cannot hold that the appearance of the Person of Jesus in history is due to new, creative Divine action. We are indeed told that 'the initiation of life in a special form, and still more of a special society, particularly a religious society, can never be explained by the actual condition of the sphere within which it appears and persists.'[66] But Schleiermacher adds immediately: 'Although Jesus' being transcends in nature the sphere in which He arose, yet nothing need prevent us from supposing that the emergence of such a life is the effect of an evolutionary power inherent in man's racial nature—a power which reveals itself at particular points, in accordance with hidden but still divinely ordered laws, in order thereby to benefit humanity as a whole.' It is true that extraordinary endowments, wherever found, constitute a new beginning. But we must suppose that all heroes 'spring forth from the universal fount of life for the good of the particular circle in which they make their appearance; and the fact that they emerge from time to time must—if we are to apprehend

the higher significance of human life—be regarded as an event happening according to law.' Now this evolutionary power inherent in the race is essentially identical with the *semina occulta* which Augustine believed to have been imparted to things. Augustine, however, besides these recognised a secret causality in God, not put by Him into the world. This does not exist for Schleiermacher. Hence his view of the world could not but betray a tendency to set forth the Divine working under purely natural conceptions. Dorner quite transforms Schleiermacher's ideas when for the conception of an evolutionary racial power he substitutes the thought that 'for the explanation of its origin (the Person of Jesus) we must go back to the Divine fount of being.'[67] What Schleiermacher really means is that everything in the world must be traceable to immanent factors, which ultimately, no doubt, do carry us back to the Divine fount of being; but a new influx of Divine life from a transcendent sphere he nowhere recognises.

His theory, indeed, follows from the assumption that because God is immutable, there can arise in Him no new purpose. From this he infers

wrongly that in the world also there can arise nothing new, nothing not already sufficiently implicit in the power imparted to the world. Now this mysterious evolutionary power, this universal fount of being, from which even the Person of Jesus is to be conceived as flowing, are utterly unknown entities; as are also the extra laws he postulates for the purpose of explaining how heroes emerge from time to time.

Nor did Schleiermacher regard it as the task of scientific history to discover these secret laws. Not even the philosophy of history is charged by him with this duty.[68] In this respect he differs markedly from those mistaken modern theorists on history, who have made it the task of historical research to discover universal laws.[69] To suppose that universal laws constitute historical process is erroneously to carry over to history the conceptions of natural science. Process is thereby given an aspect of necessity. And the sole ground for holding that the new factor which breaks forth in genius is derived, by secret laws, from the evolutionary power inherent in humanity is the *petitio principii* or assumption that history is completely explicable by immanent factors, and

that any new element must somehow and somewhere have been already dormant in things.

The rejection of miracle, in the sense of new creative activity of God in the world, leads to the conclusion that a view of the universe which ignores Christian faith, or abstracts from it, can yield conceptions adequate to all cosmic process, and provides us with an objective knowledge of the cosmic nexus; hence, it is held, the Christian faith has no option but to submit to this philosophy, this view of things settled independently of faith, and must be duly curtailed to suit its requirements. Usually the way in which this happens is that certain conceptions of law are accepted as adequate to comprehend all that goes on within the universe; the whole of things appears, from the objectively metaphysical point of view, as a well-ordered system of law. With this metaphysic Christian faith is then combined. The essential content of all spatial and temporal process is conceived as held and arranged within a network of laws, partly known to us and partly unknown. All that happens can in principle be brought under this system. God's government of the world consists in His having provided a fine

network of laws teleologically related to each other. These laws are so perfect that through their instrumentality the Divine will is perfectly expressed at each successive moment. God's sovereign rule coincides with the working of natural law. Or, to put it otherwise, there is an inviolable nexus which embraces the whole universe. 'Each phenomenon is explicable only from the natural complex of causes and effects which constitutes the world as a whole, and in which the eternal will of God comes to fruition.'[70] Lang expressly denies that God ever 'intrudes' into that ordered texture of cause and effect in which the universe consists. That, he says, is a false 'Judaic' conception of the Divine working, and represents God as a being of caprice, who strikes into the cosmic process here and there in particular extraordinary acts. The system of the world thus becomes 'a world of necessity.' If it be objected that this necessity crushes man and shuts out the living God, Lang replies that the very essence of Christian faith consists in our unshaken confidence that this inviolable system is subsidiary to higher ends; so that even when the connection of events works oppressively, a

Christian nevertheless must have faith that all is so ordered as to serve the highest purpose of life as willed by God. 'So far it is quite right that a man should regard everything which happens to him, dark or bright, as a dispensation of Divine love—love that would lead him to repentance by severity and goodness, would evoke his moral powers, and give his love occasion for active self-manifestation.' [71]

Lang's statement is a typical example of this method of combining religious faith with a purely causal interpretation of the world.

His error lies in his failing to take Christian experience as point of departure, and in starting rather from ideas which have no relation to that experience. The result is that a unified view of things is never reached. Christian ideas are all the time trying to break the fetters of a too narrow philosophy, while the philosophical ideas which have been laid down as fundamental strive to crush down Christian experience, or to deprive it of all but a merely apparent validity as a purely subjective impression.

The difficulty can be overcome only when we set out from the ideas implicit in Christian

faith, and then seek a better understanding as between them and the generalisations of non-religious thought.

The ideas of law and of causality essential to thought are elevated to a quite wrong plane when they are used to interpret the whole compass of the Divine action. Even Lang feels this, and writes: 'If God is in the world only as its creative ground, as the principle ubiquitously pervasive of all cosmic phenomena, laws, motions, then the Divine causality and the world-system are precisely coincident in scope.'[72] And he adds: 'In scope, be it observed, not in nature.' This remark betrays the same wholesome tendency as we find in Schleiermacher, the tendency to differentiate, after all, between the two points of view—the world as ordered by natural law, and the world as governed by God. If the nature of the Divine working, however, is *sui generis*, this must be given definitive expression in our world-view from the first, not merely combined later with ideas of a different sort. If God is will-power, then the working of His will cannot be manifested in a system merely of law. All ideas taken straight out of empirical thought,

such as natural law and causality, fail when they are extended to cover the universe as a whole. And in the conception of miracle we see a token of this discrepancy between a religious and a non-religious reading of the world.

If the system of nature be regarded as a complete expression of the Divine will, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that that will reveals itself not merely in acting upon evil (as a will that overcomes and judges sin), but in directly calling evil, wherever it is found, into existence. For the nexus and the laws of nature operate in evil too. Similarly, if the entire cosmic process be placed under the category of necessity and derived from creative Divine action, evil appears equally with good to have its origin in the act of God. Every form of freedom is cancelled if each event is explicable by natural law. And in Lang and Biedermann it is a mere inconsistency that notwithstanding they defend the freedom of the will.

Biedermann writes: 'That which can be known by the process of pure thought is:

'(1) The *pure form*—abstracted from all real content—of sensible and spiritual being itself; which forms the object of *mathematics* and *logic*.

'(2) *General ideas and laws* obtained by abstraction from the particular external and internal perceptions as combined in experience; which ideas and laws enable us to understand that which is perceived in particular phenomena. This is the object of the *empirical* sciences, which take a wider scope as the circle of experience broadens. And

'(3) The *ground* of the entire experiential world, logically inferred from the relation of the two constitutive factors—ideal and material being—present in all experienced content; and this is the object of *metaphysic*.' [73]

Here under (2) the task of the empirical sciences is defined as being the formation of general conceptions and laws, of which particular details are the result. But this is to turn thought as it functions in the natural sciences into the method determinative for all sciences whatsoever. The science of history, which has to do with the particular and individual, simply drops out. Metaphysic, accordingly, takes account merely of natural science. Its conceptions and its laws — the laws of nature, that is — are made to appear as columns supporting the entire structure of the

universe. They are the iron pillars of the cosmos. So that, in consistency, Biedermann's metaphysic is obliged to end in the conclusion that the core and secret of the universe is given to us in logical reality merely.[74] The laws of nature in their logical form are determinative in establishing the content predicable of the ground of the world. Further, in consistency Biedermann has to exhibit the essence of God Himself under purely logical conceptions. The ideas of natural science encroach even upon this supreme domain. Hence for Biedermann the Divine government of the world means simply that the Divine will is actualised through the instrumentality of a world ruled by natural law.[75] Even the personality of God is regarded as a form of representation necessary indeed for religion,[76] but none the less inadequate, inasmuch as the laws of nature function impersonally.[77] No one can doubt the personal piety of Biedermann, to whom Christian faith in providence was very life; but to him religion seemed to demand all these sacrifices on the altar of causality as interpreted in the sciences of nature. Even from such consequences he did not shrink, sustained as he was

by the unflinching faith that even under ideal forms necessitated by scientific thought he was preserving the convictions of piety. And the illusion consists simply in his regarding our one-sided ideas of causality derived from particular sciences as capable of furnishing a logically correct expression for all that goes on in the world, and even in God Himself.

This means that the laws of nature are given the too high function of constituting the proper ground of all that happens. The world is simply a system of functioning natural law. And of all such laws God is the logical source and basis. All that goes on being thus determined by natural law, both in process and in ground, of course miracle of every kind drops out. It would only interrupt the wonderful harmony of law. Just as in Spinoza miracle is viewed as a disturbance of nature and the cosmic order, so is it also with Biedermann.

The conception of God and that of nature, it is held, are coincident. 'On the other hand, the idea of *an absolute personal world-government*, and the conception of *a natural order* immanent in all cosmic existences—that is, the conception of nature—these two things,'

he holds, 'are mutually exclusive.'[78] Even though we are far from understanding the inmost essence of nature, his mind is nevertheless dominated by the assumption that nature in its metaphysical essence can be comprehended under the forms of logical conceptions of law. Such laws of nature as we have already discovered are the commencement of working out this logical scheme of all things.

It is especially noteworthy that in Biedermann the conception of 'nature' is given so wide a sense that it becomes identified with 'the world.'[79] So that a system of natural laws is held to be capable of explaining the entire universe, including among other things man's spiritual life. Biedermann does not see, however, that nothing can result from this but the most rigid determinism.

In the third edition of Lipsius' *Dogmatic* we perceive an inward conflict going on between a view of the world which negates God's individual providence, and an attempt notwithstanding to reassert its reality. Paragraphs 421-432 are directly opposed to paragraphs 433-436. To begin with, it is denied that God's providence is personal in character. 'If we start with the

assumption of a directly personal influence of God on each particular factor of the world-process and on each particular act and experience of the individual,' he writes, 'the objections raised by pessimism to faith in providence are quite unanswerable.' [80] Hence it cannot be that God is personally concerned in every detail; otherwise in many cases the reproach might be flung at Him: Why hast Thou done this? In hopeless contradiction to this it is asserted in paragraph 435 'that the conscious Divine guidance of our life extends even to the minutest detail, so that there is an intentional leading on God's part, penetrating to the veriest particulars, and realising His loving purpose for us.' These two conceptions are quite incompatible. In paragraph 333 we read: 'Particular laws of nature, however, are only special moments in this Divine working, which as a totality is determined by law; that is, they are the expression of an eternal Divine reason, which pervades the world as law and necessity. To suppose that behind this Divine working, manifested in the natural order, there exists yet another mode of working in nature, is to reassert that over and above the totality of His ordered working in

nature God does some other things without order; in other words, it is to abrogate the conception of nature altogether.' Similarly, at the close of paragraph 420 it is denied that God has the same direct relation to impersonal nature as to spiritual life. Of this the necessary result would seem to be that, so far as the believer has to do with external nature, he is the subject, not of personal Divine care, but of iron necessity. In spite of this, paragraph 436 assigns to 'external events in nature and history' the significance of being interpretable as 'active proofs of special Divine providence, or as miracles in the religious sense.' This 'interpretability' is probably not intended by Lipsius as mere appearance, but as reality.

Here the fundamental error is that an idea of law derived from natural science is introduced into the conception of God, while in addition it is held that interpretation in terms of natural law exhausts the conception of nature. As a matter of fact, nature has quite other aspects, not susceptible of explanation by law. These aspects reveal themselves in æsthetic and in religious thought. For faith it is a

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self-evident truth that there is, even in nature, an immediate presence of God, not mediated by law.

To distinguish between an 'empirico-causal' and a 'religio-teleological' view of human life and its experiences is to mix up religious and scientific thought. And in spite of all his efforts to fuse together the empirico-causal view of the world with that of religion, Lipsius fails to weld them in a unity. Previous writers have pointed out other important sections of his *Dogmatic*—that dealing, *e.g.*, with the idea of religion—where the two readings of the facts are left in glaring contradiction.[81] Nor is the distinction any more successful when he is dealing with the Divine government of the world. And it is very striking that in the first two editions of the *Dogmatic* considerations, which in the third edition are exhibited as derived from empirico-causal thought, are described rather as the demands of 'speculation.'[82] The latter description is the more accurate. For the views put forward by Lipsius at this point are really not empirico-causal in character, but speculative and metaphysical. In one passage of the third edition, indeed, the

phrase 'philosophical speculation' has been left standing.[83]

For here Lipsius in meeting doubts regarding Divine providence—doubts due to the facts of suffering, evil, and the inequality of human fortune—urges that we ought not to trace the actual course of things back to 'the personal predilection of an individual Being conceived as similar to man'; rather we should recognise 'in the course of the natural and the moral world the expression of an inviolable order—an order which yet in its inviolability is absolutely rational and transcends the criticism of limited human minds.'[84] If, then, a workman falls from the roof of a new house, ought his relatives, according to this argument, to consider that the order which manifests itself in the laws of gravitation is inviolable, high and lifted up above all criticism of man? But, in fact, no particular case of falling is the expression of an inviolable order. No law of nature decreed that this man must fall. All that the law of nature says is that if he missed his footing, and could get nothing to hold on by, he was bound to fall. The law itself is totally unproductive. It is not determinative of the

particular case. But Lipsius, by his speculative and metaphysical construction, turns the laws of nature into ontological entities. Nay, he even (in paragraph 428) attributes to them most remarkable, and almost ' miraculous ' properties. ' In the interaction of an infinite multiplicity of finite factors,' he writes, ' the universal law of nature ever and again reasserts itself.' This makes it appear as if in the general cosmic conflict and strife laws of nature were broken, and that by a kind of self-regulating process these breaches had to be made good again ! Here Lipsius has unwittingly been guided by the illustration of an organism, which in its unconscious teleology does act by way of self-regulation and self-renewal. It would have been better to introduce already at this point, and not later in paragraphs 433 ff., the religious conception of God's *providentia specialissima.*

Empirico-causal study of things leads always and only to purely general conclusions. Nature in general, it tells us, is the mother-soil from which moral life springs. As a whole, nature is a soil adapted for the growth of ethico-religious life. And in contrast to nature there unfolds the higher life of spirit. This is a true

view; but it will not cover the fortunes of any particular human being. It can only present us with the enigma that 'in our experience—limited, no doubt, and imperfect—natural process seems to be carried on purely according to natural laws, and altogether irrespective of moral aims, while just for that reason it appears to come right athwart these aims from time to time.' [85]

Lipsius therefore supplements this point of view by another; there is, he says, a personal providence. But fundamentally he has shut himself off from this as a possibility by asserting that the order of natural process, as governed by law, exhausts the content of nature.

The empirico-causal interpretation, in so far as it is really empirico-causal, runs alongside of the individual religious view. But so far as it is speculatively metaphysical, and carries empirical ideas into our thought of God, it directly contradicts the religious view of the world.

A very sharp opposition between science and belief in miracle is maintained by Herrmann, who holds that this is an opposition we have no right to mitigate.[86] He censures writers like

Stange or Beth for denying the antagonism between miracle and the uniformity of nature.[87] On the one hand, he affirms the conception of miracle in the most uncompromising way. A miracle is an event which is 'not according to law,' or which 'we do not conceive of as grounded in the nexus of things, which we cannot interpret by the regular process of events.'[88] The connection of miracle with the hearing of prayer he thus defines: 'Christian submission can arise within us only if through our prayer, from beginning to end, as its very life-blood, there streams the confidence that the Father, who has revealed Himself to us, is letting Himself be moved by our petitions to open up a new future for the course of things.'[89] He finds that the energy of prayer is weakened if there breaks in the disturbing thought of the rigidly regular nexus of things. 'For my part,' he writes, 'I see nothing to hinder the belief that God, out of pity for human weakness, may alter that on which He had resolved.[90] Against this we ought not to adduce God's fidelity to Himself, or His superiority to time. For our God abides faithful to Himself when He will not break the bruised reed, and His

superiority to time certainly does not mean that He is excluded, as an eternal law would be, from interest in the life which unfolds in time.' [91]

And yet, on the other hand, Herrmann feels that science must deny the possibility of miracle. So sharply does he state the antagonism that he can say: 'This also we concede absolutely, that the mere idea of a miracle contains a logical contradiction, and therefore cannot be developed into a clear conception. For to conceive an event as taking place in nature and yet as excepted from the regularity of nature means beyond all question to attempt to combine in a single word ideas which, logically, are incongruous. Yet in spite of this logical contradiction we hold fast to the word "miracle," and spite of the fact that they cannot be demonstrated we hold that miracles are real.' [92] The same contradiction, in his judgment, is seen in the miracle of man's moral freedom. An act of moral freedom 'denotes an escape from the consequences of our past'; it is something 'creatively new,' it is a miracle. 'There is no avoiding the awkward fact that the same event is conceived of by us as some-

thing creatively new and yet on the other hand as the outcome of an infinite series of causes.' [93]

Now Herrmann reaches this logical antinomy only because he shares the view of Stoic determinism, and takes it as a presupposition of thought that the future condition of the cosmos emerges from the present as its inevitable result.[94] This idea of the law-determined regularity of all process is, for Herrmann, 'the fundamental principle of science,' not indeed a principle derived from experience, but a presupposition of thought, which alone makes connected experience possible. But, in fact, this interpretation of the principle of causality is simply an unprovable dogma; and while we may say that experience can never lead to any such idea, we must not say that it is the presupposition of scientific thought as such. The truth rather is that, looking at the future, we reckon on various possibilities, any one of which may become real. Looking at the past, all we say is that, as a matter of fact, the present has emerged in this form out of the past; we cannot say that it was unconditionally bound to happen so. This last is the position of determinism, which explains away every new

factor in things, and holds that everything was latent in the initial stages of the world.

These thoughts of Herrmann return again in the lecture entitled ' The Christian and Miracle ' (1908).[95] To begin with, he is entirely right in saying that the conception of miracle stands for the belief that ' nature is not the whole of the reality apprehensible by man.' [96] If that be the case, then it is not for natural science to determine either what is real or what is possible. No one will expect science to deal with the question of miracle ; that question belongs to a different realm. Only it is mistaken to infer from the fact that natural science cannot deal with miracle, the impossibility of miracle as such. Herrmann, however, proceeds : ' Nature, in the sense of natural science, denotes the law-determined nexus of all that is demonstrably real.' This definition is satisfactory only if we add that it is from special points of view merely that science can study nature at all ; it is only in so far as it formulates in terms of law the universal, the uniform in nature, that science can comprehend nature, essentially and in idea. On the other hand, the conception of nature has in it something

mysterious and infinite. For Herrmann the conception of natural science defines that which is 'demonstrably real'; in other words, the conception of *natural* science defines the conception of science as such. From that which can be scientifically explained he distinguishes that which can be experienced—this last being bound up with our feeling of self. But this distinction is extremely dubious. For everything that can be experienced, and is not expressible in terms of universal law, is *ipso facto* proved real and actual, and thereby comes within the purview of science.

The main point is this, that natural science never dreams of demonstrating 'the law-determined nexus of the demonstrably real as such'; such a task goes far beyond its province. Much that is demonstrably real—the individual's spiritual life, for instance, or the events of history—is not covered by natural science at all. Even if we regard psychology as a discipline of natural science, still the higher spiritual life and the entire field of history would be exempted from its scope. Though miracle then is real, yet it by no means requires to belong to that province of reality

with which natural science is concerned. In any case, science can give no final judgment here. Rade, therefore, is on much better lines when he brings out the fact that miracle belongs to the realm of that which is individual and specific—to the realm, in short, of history.[97]

Not only so; what natural science does is rather to formulate particular laws, which frequently cross each other, since they construe the same process or event from different points of view.[98] It is entirely outside its province to attempt to bring all the phenomena with which it deals into one law-determined nexus. Rather it reports an infinite number of connections, perpetually crossing and recrossing, and so producing an infinite tangle of events. Now into these connections there intrude the voluntary acts of man, which are not subject to the jurisdiction of natural science. Nature and history exert a mutual influence. On this ground alone it is incompetent for natural science to claim to investigate 'the law-determined nexus of whatever is demonstrably real.' How the particular connections dovetail into each other is hidden from us. And therefore for our minds nature is, in fact, enigmatic. New beginnings appear,

there is a real development; *i.e.* there arises what is really new, what was not already present at the earlier stages. Chemism is something new as contrasted with mechanism. Crystal-formation, again, is a higher stage as compared with all lower ones; above all, the organic is new as compared with the inorganic, and genius as compared with its environment. To try to discover here a single law-determined system of connection is in any case not the part of natural science. Indeed there is no such thing as a universal system interpretable in deterministic fashion. A metaphysic which audaciously sought to elucidate 'the law of all laws'—a single law of nature, that is, embracing the whole universe—would be incompatible with Christian faith. Christian belief in miracle demands that new elements arise in the world, not essentially produced out of the previous state of things. The supposition that this is so contradicts no axiom of natural science, no law of thought. It is inevitable, indeed, if there be a transcendent world, in real relations to the world of immanence.

Herrmann has said that 'he who gains from religion the courage to speak of miracle, must

also concede that he is representing as real something impossible to apprehend by any means of knowledge open to science, something which cannot belong to nature.' I agree that miracle cannot be apprehended by the means of knowledge at the disposal of *natural* science. But Herrmann wrongly identifies science with natural science; he makes the latter judge and criterion of what is scientifically knowable. His conception of science, in short, is much too narrow.

Furthermore, by miracles Herrmann means events which are *supra et contra naturam.*[99] That miracles are *supra naturam* is unquestionable, for they are acts of God, and all God's acts are supernatural, *i.e.* their ground of origin lies above and beyond the domain of nature, even though their domain of operation is within nature. But it is a more difficult question whether they are *contra naturam.* Schuster rejects the idea decisively.[100] We must also distinguish between the different uses of the term 'nature.' It is here very much as with the frequently debated question whether the truths of Christianity are *supra et contra naturam.* Reason, certainly, no more than nature is a

self-enclosed whole. And faith, undoubtedly, will often enough find itself in antagonism to what the reason of many men regards as actual on the ground of their present experience. 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.' In later stages of life the same man, perhaps, will come to see that what he had previously considered to be irrational is the highest truth. But if we take 'reason' in the highest sense as νοῦς, we may go so far as to hold that reason is the recipient organ for the truths of faith. And so it is also with nature. We cannot but feel it to be 'natural' that a drunkard should end in ruin. But if, nevertheless, he is saved, that is a miracle which impresses us as going right against nature—provided that by nature we here mean a continuous process into which no new factor can enter from outside. Similarly, we count it 'natural' that one who is oppressed by many enemies should perish. To say that the miracle of his deliverance is *contra naturam* is only another way of putting the truth that faith looks to God with confidence for the accomplishment of things which laugh to scorn all the calculations of probability.

But if by 'nature' we mean empirical reality

as such, the phrase *contra naturam* will suggest itself only if we assume the dogma according to which all phenomena form a closed system, or if we share the prejudice that the world-process forms one rounded whole, in which each event is the inevitable consequence of the existing state of the universe. Of course, if we hold this mistaken view of the world, as a closed system confronting God, then it will be necessary to conceive of each miracle as happening *contra naturam.* What Herrmann indicates, therefore, is a law of thought which would forbid us to affirm as real what the religious man is continually experiencing. And the result is a sharp dualism between faith and reason.

What then happens is either that the convictions of faith burst the fetters of scientific prejudice, or, in the case of less powerful religious natures than Herrmann, deterministic conceptions strangle belief in the miraculous—all belief indeed in the living and active power of God.

If, on the other hand, we are convinced that nature — *i.e.* empirical reality — conceals unnumbered possibilities at every moment, we

shall not need to use the formula that miracles are *contra naturam*. If nature is not a closed system confronting God, but is continually open to the Divine influence, to regard His miraculous action as *contra naturam* is impossible.

Herrmann further writes: 'The mere resolve *to work* implies the belief that the things on which we propose to work are subject to determination by law such as our thought can master.' [101] Here it would be more accurate to say that work goes on the assumption that there is *no* law-determined nexus of all things, fixing both the things themselves and our work upon them in such wise that nothing can arise but an eternally foreordained result. On the contrary, we do our work in the conviction that we are in a position to interfere with things, and to control their subjection to law in such a manner that, by means of law, we can exert a transforming and creative influence. It is therefore misleading when Herrmann goes on to say that 'it is undeniable that we never apply this thought (of the law-determined character of things) at the moment when the faith rises up in us that the loving and providential power of God

is the source of the reality in which we are living and working. These two ideas—that which guides us in work and that which guides us in faith—we cannot so combine that the one forms merely the prolongation of the other. Rather, so far as one of the two prevails, the other temporarily retreats into the background, only to reappear in its former force when its hour again strikes.' I find nothing of this inner conflict. It is a conflict which could not but be fatal to moral activity; for it is just in our work that we most need the certainty of God's care as sustaining our labour and blessing it with success. And Herrmann himself is especially emphatic that the Christian not only experiences miracles, but does them. This is true at least of the supreme moments in work. But how could the Christian have faith to do miracles, if the very conception of work carried with it a sense of the immutable necessity of the world-process? Such a feeling would simply ruin work. Instead, the thoughts which guide work and the thoughts which guide faith meet in the conviction that the materials of work are furnished by the actually given state of the world. And the worker's task is,

out of the inexhaustibly rich field of possibilities, to realise that one which answers to the will of God. So that His providence and our work are not disparate. It is only when we are obeying His will that we can believe in His care. Further, it is just through our work that He wills to carry out His purpose. Thus thoughts of work and thoughts of faith coincide in this respect, that neither can believe in a course of things fixed rigidly by a law-determined order. Just as we can influence things and attain our ends by means of natural law, so must God be able to realise His kingdom by means of nature, which does not confront Him, but has in Him its very being.

At the present time nothing is commoner than the remark: Miracles do not happen. So much is this held to be the presupposition of all science that the man who talks of miracle is a proper object of compassion, as a mere non-progressive out of all relation to the present. Now such polemic is justified, if what is meant is to combat a wrong idea of miracle. There can be no events which break natural law. But very often, by an unobserved transition, the polemic is so extended as altogether to undermine the founda-

tions of religious experience. This happens constantly when conceptions valid only of relations between particular facts are carried over to the world as a whole, and its relation to particulars. This is a very frequent transference, but it lands us in errors of principle. The more confidently miracle is denied, the less are the bases of denial scrutinised. The assertion is often made that all modern thought rests on the 'presupposition' that miracles do not happen; and that the presupposition is really implicit in the logical categories of the understanding. But the more carefully these presuppositions are investigated, the less do they hold together. Constantly that which is given in individual empirical experience is made decisive as to what is possible in the universe as a whole.

Specially typical, I think, is the treatment of belief in miracle by Erich Adickes.[102] Adickes is a resolute opponent of all such religious beliefs. And he too mentions, as the ground why he cannot accept miracle of any kind, 'the unitary causal nexus,' which natural science cannot possibly surrender. It is noteworthy, I feel, that Adickes sees clearly that miracle is implicitly present in all Theistic faith

in providence, in the faith that there is a personal guidance of human fortunes. In contrast to many theologians, who conceal from themselves the metaphysical consequences of faith in providence, Adickes quite rightly puts the alternative: *either* Theistic faith in providence, including belief in miracle, *or* the acceptance of an all-embracing, deterministically conceived causal nexus. The following lines are, I think, worth quoting:—'The hypothesis of natural science, that there is a causal nexus, all-embracing and permitting no exception, is itself only a faith. It is the life-principle of science, but science cannot prove it. True, one often hears the opposite; but Hume stands there invincibly demonstrating that mere experience can never yield true universal validity or necessity. Only — without this universal causal nexus, no science proper! For science it is the fundamental postulate; and the more we analyse experience, the more do we find the hypothesis confirmed. Still, an element of faith operates in it all the time, and will never quite disappear, however closely probability may approach to certainty.

'However much all this (faith in miracle and

in revelation) may contradict the views of natural science, in itself it is neither unthinkable nor impossible. Rather it is a case of faith against faith: natural science has faith in an uninterrupted causal nexus, and so have I; the Theist has faith in miracle and the real guidance of life. Neither refutes the other, and neither yields to the other's argument. What you have even on the side of natural science—so far as it enters on the province of philosophy—is no longer real knowledge, but hypotheses of faith, in regard to which individual predisposition will always speak the first word and the last. No more than Haeckel can I share the dreams of the Theist, and my nature equally reacts against miracle; but I do not believe that proofs are available by which it is possible to convince one's opponent of the falsity of his faith.'

In this argument I find two things wrongly identified: the principle of causality (every event has a cause), and the deterministic interpretation of that principle (there exist only causal equations; mechanism is the basal type of all causality). I, too, believe in a causal nexus of all things, in the sense that nothing new can arise in the world which does not stand in

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causal relations to the previously existent. But I do not share the superstition that there is nothing new in the effect as contrasted with the cause. It is only this superstition that makes belief in miracle impossible. The belief that each event has a cause is justifiable; but the hypothesis that the category of necessity as a human conception is a reflection of a universal necessity dominating the universe is a belief that can be refuted. Further, in this connection much is affirmed of the science of nature which holds true only of the philosophy of nature, and even then of a philosophy which has gone all astray, and has turned into a metaphysic the credulous prejudices of a bygone period of natural science. Natural science as such has nothing to do with inferences respecting the universe as a whole. It makes neither believing nor unbelieving hypotheses in regard to what lies outside its province; it simply observes facts and brings them under definite laws. Nor does it assume that there exists a system of laws completely explanatory of the universe, or a universal causal nexus interpretable in deterministic terms.

CHAPTER IV

REVELATION, DEVELOPMENT, AND MIRACLE [1]

THE science of religion does not start with the question whether religion has been called into existence by Divine revelation, or owes its origin to man's subjective experiences and inward needs. Its first question rather is: What goes on in the souls of religious men? In a purely empirical spirit it inquires what religious faith men have in different religions; and how it takes shape in cultus and in prayer, in expiatory usage and in sacrifice. What is its influence on moral life? What ideas as to the gods arise from it?

Indeed, the question whether the religious life as such is based on truth frequently does not come up at all in the science of religion. And yet the problem of truth necessarily arises even in scientific inquiry. It does so in a two-fold form. First, does religion as a whole rest upon any basis of truth? Secondly, is there anywhere to be found a perfect religion?

So that we must put the empirical science of religion on one side, and the philosophy of religion and dogmatic on the other, and hand over the problem of truth to the latter.

To bind up the question of truth, mainly or exclusively, with the question as to a supposititious origin of religion in its first form is a mistake. It is unlikely that the first form of religion will ever be discovered. It is with religion exactly as with man's ethical life. We may set up theories as to a supposed origin of the moral life, we may finally go back to original instincts, which reach a wider expansion through the experiences of men in their social existence. But we can only ascertain the validity of ethical precepts by investigating what goes on in conscience at present.

Similarly with the religious life. Empirical inquiry shows that religion is a universal phenomenon in history, which finds involuntary expression everywhere. It shows that in all religions man has a sense of being bound to a higher power, a feeling of obligation. Everywhere there is asserted a communion of man with God and godlike beings. This communion is not of man's making; rather the gods reveal

themselves, make known their will, insist on human reverence. Hence the question of truth merges in another: Is there such a thing as Divine revelation, and can there be living and personal communion with God on the basis of revelation? Every Divine revelation and all communion of man with God, as of God with man, is a miracle; inasmuch as what is then asserted is a living intrusion of God in the human world.[2] Our definitions of miracle suit these instances exactly. Divine revelation does not arise from the intramundane causal nexus; it is in no way derivable from known laws. It is not indicated by the given condition of the universe. It is certainly true that revelation breaks no law of nature; for we could only say that it broke through the causal nexus of the world-process if we adopted the mistaken hypothesis that a causal nexus which in point of fact is never complete really forms a closed and completed chain.

The reality of the communion of God with man even in this case is perceivable only by one who takes a religious view of the facts before him. The truth of this interpretation, again, is something that neither scientific

history, nor the psychology of religion, nor any investigation of the phenomenology of religion, can demonstrate. Once more the final ground of decision is the fact that justice must be done to the rights, as to the idiosyncrasy, of religious experience. That experience, as such, involves the miracle of the fellowship of God with man, and of man with God.

Our religious verdict on the history of religions must avoid either extreme: that, on the one hand, of saying that at bottom there is truth in every religion, hence all religions are equally true and equally false. And not less that, on the other hand, of saying that only one religion can be true, consequently all others are a deception.

Each of us uses involuntarily a criterion by which we measure what in the different religions is deceit, perversion, or superstition, as well as their elements of truth. The criterion we employ is just what we ourselves regard as religious truth. Christianity with perfect justice maintains that in the Person of Jesus, God has spoken His final word in history. The revelation of God in Jesus which religious experience appropriates is thereby of necessity made the

criterion of true and false in the history of religions.

This is not to isolate the Person of Jesus; He is not regarded as the sole revelation of God. But His Person is the crowning point of revelation; only from the vantage-ground it affords can we understand, in their entirety, the perpetual self-disclosures God has been making to humanity. Now this Person of Jesus as He is preached to-day confronts us as a real power. It is not something merely past; it is something abiding. The effects produced by it—effects which may be summarily described as the preaching of the Gospel and the Christian's life of faith—make it an actual and present power. Nor is revelation to be confined to the inner character of Jesus; on the contrary, it is given equally in His action, His death, and His heavenly consummation. Its efficacy is shown by the whole history of Christianity. Backward from Jesus, too, the history of Israelite religion takes on the aspect of revelation, for there we have a connected tract of history which culminates in Jesus.

Hence it is self-evident that Jesus must have been influenced by the piety of Judaism. All

the prominent ideas of Palestinian Judaism recur in His teaching: the Kingdom of God, righteousness, Messiah, demons.[3] Equally certain is it that by degrees, and in an ever-increasing measure, tendencies of thought and feeling due to Hellenistic, Syrian, and Egyptian origins began to influence Christianity. But we cannot possibly describe Christianity as the product of Judaism on the one hand, and on the other of the ethnic chaos in the Roman Empire. The productive and organising factor, rather, is the new and mysteriously creative power of the Person of Jesus, adding a quite original element.[4]

All that historical research can do is to accept this mystery, without pronouncing further on its solution. Even at this point the science of history must not use the word 'miracle.' It is quite mistaken, however, to draw the inference that therefore the language of religion and theology is equally bound to keep clear of the conception of the miraculous. On the contrary, in that sphere we have every reason to interpret the mystery in the sense that it represents a new self-manifestation of God, surpassing all previous experience—a manifestation which is an expression of God's whole nature in human

history. This interpretation is not in the least subjective or deceptive; what it asserts is objectively valid truth. For religious experience is laden with truth of the loftiest and most perfect order.

It is vain to attempt to discover mysterious and hidden 'laws,' by which the new arises out of the old.[5] Any such attempt is justifiable only on the Spinozistic assumption that the conception of law penetrates to the very deeps of the universe, so that even all Divine action is law-determined.[6] That, however, is falsely to take a category of natural science as valid for the universe as a whole.

Just as in Schleiermacher, we find in Wendt an attempt to derive the Person of Jesus from the human race as such. He writes: 'According to the naturalistic view, the qualities with which Jesus was born are traceable, by the laws of nature, to the constitution of His parents and His ancestors, in such wise that we are bound to think back the series of cause and effect to the very beginnings of the human race, and even beyond them till we reach the first beginnings of organic life on earth; yet the Christian transcends this view by his religious certainty

that, prior to the creation of the human race and the foundation of the world, God predestinated Jesus to be Mediator of His saving revelation in its perfect form. From the beginning God so planned the law-directed order of the world as that, at the right moment, Jesus, the perfectly qualified organ for His redeeming purpose, should emerge.' [7]

Here 'the law-directed order of the world' is interposed as intermediary between the Divine purpose and its realisation, with the unfortunate result that our conceptions of causality and law are given a false importance. Further, the Divine purpose, not in its inner nature and aim, but in its execution, takes on an aspect of necessity analogous to the necessity of empirical laws. Thus in another passage Wendt says: 'In the Christian view, miracles happen in accordance with the same supreme cosmic law, and with the same necessity, as the events which correspond to the usual order of nature.' [8] This means raising cosmic laws to the same level as God's purpose of love, with the result that the execution of that purpose is given a rigid and impersonal aspect. Consequences, too, emerge which are out of harmony

with Wendt's system. All the actions of Jesus' ancestors — particularly the marriages they contracted, but also their moral acts—must have been foreordained. For every action has consequences for character handed down by inheritance. As an inference this is unavoidable, if 'the whole law-directed order of the world and of human history' is interposed as intermediary between the Divine predestination of Jesus and His actual appearance in the world. It is impossible to relate predestination merely to the material elements of the world, if the free acts of men, particularly in their marriages, are decisive for the ways in which these material elements come to be grouped.

But now Wendt contends emphatically for the freedom of the will as against determinism, especially for moral freedom.[9] He rejects the doctrine of predestination.[10] Not only so, but he holds that in giving freedom to man God voluntarily limits His omniscience. He does not foresee how men will act in virtue of their freedom. 'It would be contradictory to assert both real human freedom and also absolute Divine prescience in respect to the decisions of the human will. If now we consider that

such moral decisions are perpetually recurring in human life, and that each of them, according as it falls out, draws after it different trains of consequence, and that, moreover, the decisions of individual men condition the historical development of humanity as a whole, it becomes clear that the above-mentioned limitation of the Divine prescience affects not merely unimportant details, but the most momentous questions of all — the development of individual lives and of mankind as a whole for the Kingdom of God.'[11] How the two positions are to be reconciled — Jesus is predestinated in the law-determined nexus of the world, and God does not foreknow the free actions of men — is to me incomprehensible.

We conclude, therefore, that we ought to separate these two things: the predestination of Jesus in the Divine purpose, and the actual course of the world, as expressed in our conceptions of order and law. We are justified in combining both in one only if the course of the world displays nothing which is not in harmony with the Divine will—nothing opposed to God, in short. In point of fact, however, each distinct tract of history contains elements not

directly issuing from the law-determined order of events. Historical empiricism must simply accept the mystery, and the philosophy of history also must confess its inability to discover the laws of the emergence of new from old; the religious interpretation of the world, on the other hand, will and must always use the idea of miracle, and is entitled to its conviction that this interpretation is entirely valid.

It is a further question whether, from Moses onwards, God really spoke to the prophets of Israel. Their conviction that they bore God's commission was a true conviction—so we must hold, simply because the essential content of their message is true for our minds also. One who believes this, however, need not go on to argue that God's prophets in every case uttered nothing but infallible truth. He need not conclude that in a real sense it was the Divine will that the Amalekite king Agag should be executed without mercy (1 Sam. xv.); that all the Canaanites should be exterminated; or that Elijah should cause a massacre of the priests of Baal (1 Kings xviii.). Even in the case of the prophets of Israel, a deeper knowledge of God has mingled with it less perfect concep-

tions. Even the numerous false prophets were convinced that God had spoken to them. They too said of themselves, with inward assurance, that God had commissioned them. So that the criterion of what was really a Divine message can only be found, in the last resort, in the ethico-religious content of the message itself and in the judgment of history. The revelation of God in Israel resulted in the discipline of the people by the law, the training of their life on moral principles rooted in faith in Jahve. This is not the place to discuss the shades of difference visible in the history of Old Testament prophecy. Whether we hold, with certain scholars, that in dealing with the history of the patriarchs we can carry back our historical inferences as far as Abraham, or think we have solid ground under our feet only when we come to Moses,[12] in either case it is clear that the historical development of Israelite religion rested on a series of Divine revelations. We cannot assert that the prophets of the eighth century were the first to recognise that God is moral power. Even in the case of Moses, communion with God must have had an ethical basis, in spite of the fact that as yet the ethical was fused with the national.

It may be asked whether men like Mohammed and Zarathustra had real revelations from God. As for Mohammed, we can see that with real and profound revelations there more and more mingled thoughts of egoistic sensuousness. And as regards the religion of Zarathustra, probably of all non-Biblical religions it stands nearest, in content, to that of Israel. I feel no difficulty in supposing that here also the revealing power of God was at work. Hence it is intelligible that the Persian religion, by its conception of resurrection, should have influenced the religion of Israel beneficially after the Exile.

Other religions, too, may well have acted from without on Judaism and Christianity through various ideas and symbols. Much was assimilated from these quarters. The decisive question, however, is this: Where lies the creative power of the Israelite and the Christian religion? Does it lie in the diverse religions of the Mediterranean; did their fusion produce a new religion? Or does it lie in the original experiences of the prophets and of the Person of Jesus? Only a history of philosophy which interprets all that is new as merely the summa-

tion of existing factors will explain Christianity as the product of religious movements and cults in the Roman Empire ; and this ultimately means either the denial that Jesus had any historical existence, or the assertion that His Person was unimportant and accidental. But every sober philosophy of history must acknowledge the originality of Jesus' Person, and must regard what was new in it as the secret of His personality. It must content itself with the position that we do not know, and shall never know, the laws in accordance with which new powers, ideas, and personalities emerge from the hidden depths of being in a defined succession. The Hegelian philosophy, when it sought to unveil the laws of the very Absolute, set itself an insoluble task. It represented the action of God too much in terms of natural process.

The religion of Israel, further, presupposes Semitic popular religion. This too is a divinely purposed preparation for the Jahve-faith. But we have no right to say that the advent of the latter meant nothing new, all that was great in it having already existed in Babylon.

The older dogmatic theory, which represents a monotheistic faith as having persisted un-

interruptedly — though by a narrow line of transmission—from our first parents down to the patriarchs, is entirely lacking in historic credibility. It is an artificial hypothesis. We have no certain information either as to the religion of the first human beings, or as to later corruptions from which the pure faith in God was kept intact. The theory of a single original revelation to man is a postulate which cannot be proved. Nor indeed can we start from postulates and inferences; our point of departure must be observation of the actual state of the various religions, so far as the sources enable us to study them. Now it is quite impossible for us to discover what was the original form of religion. Its origin is completely in the dark. It is quite conceivable that the primitive religions of to-day are the products of degeneration. But we are forbidden even to draw inferences as to the relatively exalted plane which the original form may have occupied.

Here the question arises whether we ought to apply the idea of revelation to non-Biblical religions in general. An alternative is open to us. Are we to derive all non-Biblical religions simply from subjective human wants, postulates

and impulses, which would mean that all the functions of religion existed, but no object for them? This view arises from the one true God being set in rigid opposition to other gods as the creations of fancy. Feeling struggles against supposing that *any* Divine revelation can be at the basis of cults which have led, say, to human sacrifice or religious prostitution. None the less, it is unthinkable that all the religions of heathendom rose simply from human desires without any religious object. The theory of a primitive revelation is wrong only in so far as it presupposes a single such revelation. Acts of God must be recognised as the data which lie at the basis even of non-Biblical religions. The language of Scripture itself bears that God has not left Himself without witness among the heathen (Rom. i. 19 f.; Acts xiv. 17, xvii. 27 f.). In Rom. i. 19 actually the word φανερόν is used. Still we of course must speak of such revelation as being given in varying degrees; the full being of God is not manifested in the religions of heathenism. But He is at work, somehow, even in them.

The question now is: How far can the idea of development be applied to the history of

religion as a whole? The idea is one which takes its rise in the realm of biology. There it denotes the growth from seminal form to completed organism, *e.g.* from seed to fruit. In a development of this kind the final form is given potentially in the seed. True, the necessary favourable conditions must be present if the final goal is to be reached. It is already prefigured in the seed-form. No other goal can be reached than that which is given in the seed. From a corn of wheat nothing can spring but an ear of wheat; no doubt a shrivelled ear or a full one, according to the external influences; still, the form is prefigured. And yet, in spite of all, even here the idea of growth contains an insoluble mystery. Now, in this biological sense it is only with certain modifications that the idea of development can be employed in the sphere of history; more than that, the modifications are always the greater, the more comprehensive the realm in which the idea is to be applied. In the case of an individual man I can speak of development from the first germ to old age. But yet in the germ there are contained very different possibilities of development, according to the external influences

and to the use made of moral freedom. So that we can scarcely say that already there slumbered in the germ all that the man has become. No, in the germ there lay a multitude of possibilities. Which of these should be realised depended primarily on the moral power or weakness of the man, and in the second place also on the environment whose influence was at work.

The distinction is still more clear when we pass to larger spheres. Take a nation as a whole, say the Greek nation. Did the goal reached up to the present hour—the growth of Greece as it is to-day—did it lie implicit in the primitive condition of the nation? Was the nation bound by immanent necessity to become just this? That certainly cannot be. No historian would dream of calculating from a present state what must follow on it by immanent necessity, thereafter testing by history whether his reckoning was accurate. On the contrary, he examines the facts and afterwards seeks for the links of connection. Every nation has become what it is to-day through the influence of many external factors. Or take the development of architecture. Here, too, all sorts of

things might have evolved from the first beginnings, and the influence of external factors has given the course of architecture a quite novel and unexpected direction. So that I regard it as erroneous to say with Pfleiderer that 'the basal thought in the doctrine of development is that things grow out of their beginnings by an inner necessity of nature.' [13] Such a conception fits biology, but not history; for in biology I can determine the stages of growth beforehand, in history I cannot.[14] Hence, if we apply the conception of evolution to the sphere of religion as a whole, we ought to beware of giving the impression that it is the biological conception which is meant. From the primitive form of religion very different religions could arise; and in point of fact utterly different religions have arisen. The influence of national life, of moral experience, religious apathy, but also new Divine acts—these were the external factors through whose instrumentality religion came to divide into a scarce conceivable multiplicity of cults. And here these external influences have actually been the decisive ones. Now, a conception of development which represents the final form as latent in the seed is here misleading.

It creates the illusory idea that the development has proceeded strictly according to a scheme. A graduated division of religions—say into tribal religions, national religions, ethical religions, religions of redemption—is not without its value. But such a graduation may easily produce the wrong impression that by the scholar's arrangement the actual historical order is revealed, and therewith the driving force of the evolution. But such an impression would be wrong. Religions are differentiated according to nationality. Sometimes they degenerate. Elsewhere moral impulses lead to a rise in the religious level. Or finally, new revelations start a new process of growth. Here is the point at which the 'evolutionist conception of religious history' is constantly chargeable with denying revelation altogether.[15] If the idea of development is taken in a strictly biological sense, of course it does exclude the advent of new creative factors—of miracle, in short. In the case of individual scholars, however, it may be a question whether this is meant.

The difficulties of the idea of development when applied to the philosophy of history

have always been pointed out by Troeltsch. Both the positivist doctrine of development, which traces all change to external factors, and the idealist, which assumes the inward working of a teleological idea, lead to difficulties. The main problem he formulates thus admirably in his earliest essays: 'Does the idea of development in point of fact make it impossible to believe in a self-manifestation of the Divine Being, or in absolute religious truth as given thereby? Does the view of the factors of history it implies exclude the influx of Divine forces?'[16] To this he answers, unambiguously, that we simply must assume the reality of self-communication on God's part, in varying degrees of intensity. 'But as to what becoming in itself is, or that which becomes, whether the later form is contained in the earlier, and how or whether in some way something is added to the earlier so that out of the earlier there arises that which is different from what it was formerly—all this, alike in general and in the particular case, remains wholly dark.' It is only for naturalism that the 'influx of new forces' is impossible. 'But religious faith by its very essence demands self-communication

on God's part, only there can it find an immovable point of rest. Nor is it clear how such a faith is made impossible by our so slender insight into the factors of becoming.' [17] These are sentences which appear to me less liable to misconstruction than any which follow.

Troeltsch then goes on to criticise 'the older anthropomorphic supernaturalism,' and the position which claims for Christianity an 'absolutely supernatural origin.' Yet for him too Christianity rests on a 'miracle,' an influx of Divine life. Despite all its links with Judaism, with Parsism, or with Hellenism, it still remains true that 'its proper source was, after all, the wondrous personality of Jesus.' [18]

Troeltsch has treated of the idea of development and its application to the history of religion [19] in the most comprehensive and rewarding fashion; and yet he seems to me to have set before him a quite inaccessible goal in arguing as he now does that 'in particular some substitute must be found for Hegel's dialectic, viz. a teleological law of development, which shall rank unconditionally as the last and highest conception in the philosophy of history.' [20] This law he has

not found as yet; but in the most thorough-going way he has faced the difficulties it must encounter.[21] The law of development, he holds, must not be so constructive as the Hegelian dialectic. 'The attempt must be given up to identify this conception of end with the productive causal law, to reckon the point of progress from the series of successive stages, or to conclude from the fact of the conception being exhausted that there has been an absolute realisation. And equally we must surrender the related doctrine that the Idea works itself out in the phenomenon according to a law, so that every temporary individual form ranks as an occultation and mediation of the pure absolute Thought which has not yet been transcended, but is based in the necessities of the method of development.' [22] But I fear that, so soon as a law of development is asserted, all the defects will reveal themselves which Troeltsch is anxious to avoid. Every law tends to press the multiform development into a mould or scheme, and so to exhibit it as more in the nature of a straight line than it really is. Every law must regard the particular stages as necessary points of transition in the realisation of the developmental end;

it must see the goal already prefigured in the germ. Every evolutionary law of religion, accordingly, has a tendency to exclude new and supernatural revelation. If we admit anything of the kind, in the sense that a new self-manifestation of God emerges in history, we thereby exclude the possibility of an evolutionary law. For we cannot embrace the empirical history of religion, along with the various Divine influences it reveals, under any single conception. We can find no law for the action of God.[23] The philosophy of history, in its dealings with religion, is bound to observe this limitation. The question must indeed arise whether the word 'law' as applied to the succession of historic epochs ought not to be avoided altogether.[24] Laws have significance for the empirical realm only; of metaphysical laws we know nothing. So that it is better not to speak of a developmental law of religion, just as no one would pretend to state the developmental law of a nation or an individual.

Troeltsch's later statements scarcely make it quite clear whether he regards a transcendent factor as intervening in the history of religion as an active force. What he certainly contro-

verts is no more than the Thomist conception of miracle, which treats miracle as intruding into history in abrupt acts, to the exclusion of empirical causality of every kind. He combats a view of the history of redemption on which the latter is inserted thus abruptly into history in general. But if the question be raised whether he himself accepts the idea of a new influx of Divine life in history, his later utterances on the point are less perspicuous. 'I believe, therefore, with the great idealists,' he writes, 'that in this seeming chaos [of the history of religion] the divine depths of the human spirit are nevertheless being revealed from different sides; that faith in God, in all forms where it is really faith in God and not the selfish practice of magic, is at heart always the same; that by its own inner logic—*i.e.* in virtue of the inner impelling power of God—it is always gaining in energy and depth, as far as is permitted by the limits of the original constitution of human spirit as bound up with nature. Only at one point has it broken through these limits, a point, however, which lies at the centre of great concentrating and converging movements of religious progress—in the religion of the prophets

of Israel and in the Person of Jesus, where a God distinct from nature evokes a personality superior to nature, with its transcendent aims and a will-power that works against the world.' [25] If now the words were to stand, that belief in God creates the highest forms of religion 'by its own inner logic,' they would form a clear expression of the view which Seeberg holds to be the logical position of the Comparative Religious School—viz. that a power once imparted by God just works on and works out of itself; He bestows on the world a certain quantum of power, and it persists in operation. But this view Troeltsch finds unsatisfactory; hence he adds the words: '*i.e.* in virtue of the inner impelling power of God.' The two things, however, are not quite the same. The presence of a superior factor must be brought out. Even so it is not certain whether the 'power of God' meant is something merely immanent or also transcendent, by which the whole history of religion is 'impelled.' It seems to me essential to say unequivocally that the impelling power spoken of is the living God, whose transcendent being is manifested in the religion of Jahve and completely in the Person of Jesus, and manifested

there otherwise than in non-Biblical religions. For Troeltsch the 'impelling power' lies in a dubious realm; it resembles the *semina occulta* of Augustine, which are imparted to the world, and it is identical with what Schleiermacher calls 'the developmental power resident in man's racial nature.' Yet in the last resort the expression 'the impelling power of God' *may* be interpreted as denoting the transcendent. This same entity, oscillating between immanence and transcendence, I find continually reappearing in Troeltsch's later pages. Touching on the history of religion, he speaks of 'a reality bound up with the spiritual core of things, onward-impelling, supersensible. The various upward movements, interruptions, and revelations of the higher spiritual life are based in the purposive action of this power as it strives upward against mere nature, strives at different points, here more clearly and profoundly, there more weakly and confusedly, till it has found for itself more adequate expression, and then works onward from this to its final ends—ends surpassing all our knowledge and imagination. This is the imperishable kernel of the idea of development, and in this

sense it is not merely a postulate of all faith, it represents a partially disclosed fact of experience.' [26] This passage, quite clearly, offers a supra-historical interpretation native to a sphere beyond and above all empirical history; an attempt to unveil the forces working behind the curtain of temporal process. To me it is questionable whether it is really possible to combine thus in the unity of the idea of 'development' both the empirical fact of the actual religions of the world and the forces operating in the ontological depths. Either the words quoted point to a religious evolution presupposing a revelation of God which acts, now more powerfully, now more feebly, as the impelling factor in religious history. In that case, a transcendent reality is influencing religious history, sometimes more strongly, sometimes less; which means that miracle—and Troeltsch will not exclude it on principle—is admitted as an operative element. Or, on the other hand, the 'supersensible reality,' the 'purposive action of this power,' is something immanent, once for all imparted to the world; which means logically that God supplies to the world a certain quantum of power, and

gives it such an onward bearing direction that of itself, and without any new influx, it gives birth to higher spiritual life. I cannot make out which of the two views Troeltsch adopts as his own. No third view seems to me really possible.

If we apply the idea of 'development' to the history of religion, it can only be in the general sense in which development means simply growth. What we find in the religions of the world is a constant process of modification by the most varied factors: stagnation and degeneration owing to the relaxed fibre of religious life, cases of sinking to a lower plane, reformations, new formations, new revelations. We can no more speak here of developmental laws than for history in general we can discover historical laws. In any case, miracle can be eliminated from the history of religion only if simultaneously we strike God Himself out of history, and conceive Him either as only a permanently transcendent Idea, or deistically as the Prime Mover of history—whose impetus thereafter works on without new self-disclosures on His part—or pantheistically, God being identified with the actual evolution of humanity.

It is clear that religious faith is incompatible with the view which makes the world a self-enclosed system, into which nothing new can enter. Nor can we conceive of the history of religion in such wise that out of its primitive form there must of necessity grow the perfected religion. On the contrary, God works in different ways, now withholding, now manifesting Himself. This is not to destroy the continuity of history. For there certainly exist links of connection between Jesus and Palestinian Judaism; between the religions of the Mediterranean and Christianity; between Moses and religion anterior to his day; between Abraham and Semitic-Babylonian religion. But the inexplicable new element lies in the supernatural factor of Divine revelation. Thereby fresh and inscrutable powers stream into the world and constitute new and permanently operative forces.

Empirical history ought to leave this transcendent factor on one side; the philosophy of history ought not to exclude it; the interpretation given by faith, however, must assert it absolutely.

CHAPTER V

SPIRITUAL MIRACLES

Is the idea of miracle applicable to those facts which play the supreme part in Christian faith and life—the fact that men are transfigured by the Divine redeeming action; the fact that sinners are converted and find forgiveness, and that in consequence their life becomes wholly changed? According to Thomas Aquinas there is in all this no miracle, since there is no departure from the natural order.[1] The natural order, he thinks, has no relation to such matters. So, too, for Catholic theology of to-day, it is essential to miracle that there should be given an event in the sphere of sense.[2]

For Luther, on the other hand, it is precisely spiritual miracles which, as miracles, are genuinely great.[3] Yet his argument had at first little influence on his successors.

Musaeus explicitly approves of Thomas' de-

finition.[4] He merely adds that miracles are events which seldom happen. Hence regeneration and all the works of sanctifying grace do not belong to the category of miracles, although they take place *praeter ordinem totius naturae creatae.* We find exactly the same conception in many writers of the seventeenth century.

Modern Lutherans, however, have returned to Luther's position, according to which faith is itself the true miracle. It is in the experience of regeneration that F. H. R. Frank finds the ultimate source and the deepest ground of certainty for belief in the miraculous.[5] The Christian knows that he owes his Christian life not to the order of natural creation, but to another cause —the order of God's grace. His conversion he feels to be a miracle, even though the operation of Divine grace on him is not in the least unmediated, but comes through the factors of his natural life. These natural media are suffused by a higher order, using them as means for God's saving ends. Hence miracle has nothing to do with chance, arbitrariness, irregularity; it is based in a certain order. To the Christian who argues back from the ex-

perience of regeneration it becomes clear that Christ is Himself the greatest miracle in history. Only by starting from this fundamental experience can he attain certainty as to miracles recorded in the Bible. Frank concedes that there must be a historical scrutiny of each separate miraculous story. But for him the central miracle lies in the realm of spirit. In this he is a disciple of Luther.

Seeberg, too, follows Luther and Frank inasmuch as for him the first and most important form of miracle is the Christian's experience, under the preaching of the Gospel, of the directly active presence of God, conveying to him an absolutely new inward life.[6] He feels that this species of miracle, the primary and most important, is often quite overlooked. The chief characteristic of miracle as such—the 'coalescence of Divine action and natural process'—comes out with special clearness in an instance of this kind.

The recognition of such spiritual miracles is a strong point of agreement between theories which in modern theology so often diverge widely. Biedermann declares that the most pregnant word to be said on the subject is that 'the best

proof of the reality of miracle is regeneration.' [7] Frank has noted and emphasised Biedermann's agreement with him here.[8] Lipsius also agrees, urging that 'in the case of "spiritual miracles" we ought to speak, in the narrower and stricter sense, of a direct interposition on God's part.' 'Justification and regeneration are not merely "the best proof of the reality of miracle"; they are themselves true and genuine spiritual miracles, their *locus* the human spirit, their Originator the personal Spirit of God entering directly into human life.' [9]

Troeltsch is at one with the writers just named in placing emphasis on spiritual miracles. For him the fundamental affirmation of religion is that it is itself 'an act of freedom and a gift of grace, an effect of the supersensuous breaking through the natural-phenomenal life of the soul, and an act of surrender which abrogates the power of natural motives.' [10] Thus 'even the empirico-phenomenal idea of causality is so modified as to admit of its being broken through by alien powers from without.' [11]

Even here, however, we may question the accuracy of the phrase 'being broken through.'

Nothing really is broken through except the prejudices of those who believe in such a causal nexus of the empirical life of sense as excludes the supersensible. It is striking, indeed, how the expression 'breaking through' continually meets one in writers of the most varied type. As a matter of fact, our empirical life is permanently open to the influences of the supersensible. We can constantly point to 'links of causation' between the transcendent and the empirical. The idea of causality admits of an infinity of possible applications. I do not find that Troeltsch in any way differs from Frank in his acknowledgment of spiritual miracles. He does indeed describe orthodox supernatural Apologetic as involving the position that man requires 'an inward reinforcement drawn from superhuman Divine power'—power 'which is known as Divine precisely by its form, which is out of all analogy to human experience, while as regards the content of its effects it manifests its Divine character solely by the fact that it palpably breaks through the normal uniformity of human soul-life'; [12] but the words cited above from Troeltsch himself are a very near approach to this 'supernatural Apologetic.'

In any case they presuppose that what comes breaking in with the supersensible reality is actually something transcendent.

Now it is very frequently said that, in discussing the problem of miracle, we may put spiritual miracles aside. The decisive question is as to the possibility of nature miracles. The existence of spiritual miracles is so much a fact of experience in religious life everywhere, that to deny it would be equivalent to the denial of religion as such.

It is of the greatest importance, however, that we should clearly realise the consequences of admitting spiritual miracles, as well as the conception of miracle to which they lead. If we take Wendt's statement of the problem, and ask 'whether God can do miracles, *i.e.* can bring to pass such effects in the world as are not explicable as products of the regular immanent causal nexus,' [13] then it is quite clear that spiritual miracles involved in the fellowship of the soul with God fall under this conception, and must be called miracles in the metaphysical sense. It is impossible to explain by immanent causes the fact that the prophets were seized upon by the power of God, or that men who

pray gain by prayer new spiritual power, confidence, or resignation.

The explanation just rejected is, indeed, only possible for one who is bent on explaining what is fundamental in prophecy as due to sheer illusion. So, too, it is with the life of prayer. There the human soul has an experience of Divine influences which far surpass all immanent relations. It follows, therefore, that God does create new elements in human life, elements not simply derivable from the antecedent factors of the situation. The fact that He is the living God of course makes this quite intelligible. For how could one be sure of God as working in present power, unless He perpetually wrought new things in the world? If all process were but past Divine acts working themselves out, the living God would be totally concealed. The world and life would run on exactly as if He had withdrawn Himself from the cosmos, and left it solely to the lingering influence of His past acts. Now it is obvious that all new Divine acts involve far-reaching consequences for the future. If a man gains ever new confidence, moral power, patience, resignation from God through the fellowship of

prayer, these forces actually affect his bodily life, his family life, his avocations, and even the life of his children. Similarly, a nation does not live merely by material civilisation and technical skill, but by moral forces; and these forces need to be constantly purified and strengthened anew by religion. The living God works in the present. And spiritual miracle is just His extension of His sway by perpetually renewed acts. But it is absurd to hold that God can only introduce new elements in the *spiritual* life of man. No dualism can be set up between nature and spirit. The whole world is open to Divine influence.

'The Christian view,' it has been said by Wendt, 'implies a conviction that the human soul, in spite of the fact that man forms part of the world, can be touched by a supramundane Divine life. Even during earthly life, the soul can take up into itself powers not born of this world—powers of the Divine Spirit, of Divine revelation.' 'The fact that this miraculous experience is not exceptional, but is found ever anew in all spiritually normal men, does not really impair its miraculous character—if, that is, we take the conception of miracle as denoting

a relation of contrast to the immanent causal nexus.'[14] The common mind, on the other hand, will only acknowledge *rare* events as miraculous. But we cannot insist on this characteristic of rarity. So far from that, we are surrounded by miracles constantly.

The recognition of spiritual miracles, therefore, implies that it is unmeaning to say that all events must be 'deducible from natural laws.' No occurrence can ever violate the laws of nature, but just as certainly no historical event can be 'deduced from natural laws.' It is impossible so to deduce either the soul's fellowship with God or any historical incident whatsoever. Every historical event, nay, every spiritual act, has an aspect in which it belongs to the sphere of sense. There can be no dualism of nature and spirit. And so we find miracle everywhere in the life of nature. To assert that man's spiritual life is, so to speak, the only door of entrance by which 'new events not arising out of the immanent causal nexus' may reach the world of sense from the transcendent, is utterly absurd. Natural science cannot in any way exhaustively master the sensible world; it is wrong therefore to insist that nature, in

contrast to spirit, must for religion be placed under the rubric 'natural law' or 'realm of necessity.' And it is a further mistake to suppose that the presence of God is more immediate and direct in the life of spirit than in that of sense.

CHAPTER VI

PROVIDENCE AND MIRACLE [1]

STRIKING events, of religious significance for our whole life, we may call miracles. From this point of view the entire field covered by faith in providence takes on a miraculous aspect. In its Christian form this faith implies that every event which touches us inwardly is of God's appointment. It is intended either to admonish and warn, or to punish and convert, or to promote and deepen life. But faith in providence cannot be demonstrated by arguments as to the purposive character of the cosmic system. For at best these arguments merely inform us that the world, on the great scale, is a realm of order. This teleological view, however, has bound up with it the possibility that order on the large scale may be secured at the price of many particular defects. So that the consoling suggestion that everything imperfect and untoward in the single life resolves itself in the glorious

harmony of the cosmic totality, that evil of every kind is as inevitable as shadow in a picture or dissolving dissonances in a piece of music, is the very reverse of Christian faith in providence. For how does it help a man who is beaten in the economic struggle to know that millions must succumb, in order that better conditions of life may be secured for a later generation? Or what does the consumptive patient gain by being told that in the world of men, as in the life of plants and animals, innumerable germs must perish in order that some few may unfold in harmonious perfection? It is just at the point where the solution attempted by general philosophy stops, that the problems of Christian faith begin. It takes up precisely those individual and personal matters which a general consideration of the cosmic system passes by. It is frequently argued that a purposive ordering of the universe must of necessity embrace also the well-being of the individual. But the inference is untenable, and too often fails us in presence of the manifold disasters and confusions of the single life.

Christian faith in providence becomes a

reality only for one who has experienced the redemptive love of God as directed to him personally. It becomes clear to him, as he looks back over the past, that the seeking love of God is traceable in all the complex circumstances of his life. Faith is certain that as in the past, so too through all the future, this holy Divine love will surround us. It is a believing certainty which must always be gained anew, by means of ceaseless inward labour and active obedience to Divine tasks, and in full view of all our bright or dark experiences. Such faith in victorious power is the high goal towards which the Christian must move. It rises above all narrow considerations of utility, if only it be gained in toil for Divine ends. And thus it mounts up to the assurance that the individual has been given a special life-task as his Divine vocation.

Faith in providence, accordingly, does not start from the general study of the world, or from an objective investigation of the fortunes of others. So often we cannot see into the inward life of other people. No; it starts from our own life, with our experience of personal guilt and of Divine grace—grace that

wins our heart, and turns us to faith and to obedience. It is obvious that without this experience of faith, without fellowship with God by prayer and thanksgiving, faith in providence is simply unattainable.

The confident trust that my personal life is governed by the educative love of God—this is not a view of life to lull men into security. It is not the case that the man who holds it is encouraged, by the assurance that Divine love is ordering all things for his good, to neglect the task of actively shaping his own career. On the contrary, Divine dispensations, which faith enables us to recognise, appear rather as demands addressed to our will. To drift on slackly would be to disobey the admonitions of God. Faith in providence, therefore, save where it takes morbid and corrupted forms, means a faith that God will guide all those who follow His leading through all difficulties which they may encounter in the course of doing His will. Even though we may have been blind to His will, or sought to escape it, He will open new doors of possibility to the sincerely penitent.

The aim of such faith is not to emancipate the believer from all possible external hardships;

its aim, equally ethical and supramundane, is that the Christian may live his life to his own spiritual profit and to the salvation of his fellows, and finally attain to transcendent perfection in the kingdom of God.

But though faith in God's fatherly providence must start from individual and personal experience, and must always be won anew and realised in our own life, it must necessarily broaden out into a general view of things.

A Christian cannot remain satisfied with the mere assurance that his own life is under Divine guidance. The certainty that God is the Father of us all implies first that the life of *all* Christians is being conducted to the same goal—perfection in the kingdom of God. It is an impossible idea, because incompatible with the Christian conception of God, that from the first He means to guide as Father only the lives of certain men—the elect—while all others are abandoned without hope to the precarious accidents of life. This distinction has been tried, *e.g.* by R. Liebe, who holds that God loves with personal and individual love only certain chosen men, whereas the rest are not the objects of His personal love at all, but are

rather used up, in the great cosmic movement, as means for the production of other independent personal existences of greater value.[2] What follows from the Christian faith is rather this, that even if there be many who never recognise God's seeking love, nay, resist it and refuse to listen to His call, yet even over them His providence is ruling. It is true, His government will take one form towards those who open their hearts to Him, and another towards those who remain more or less at a distance from Him. This is clear from the experience of men who have been converted after a long period of alienation from God. Looking back, they recognise the frequent Divine voices which had sounded even in their lives. But there can be no ground for making a distinction between sinners whom God seeks to save, and others whom He has given up.

In respect of his own life, a Christian can only praise the unmerited Divine grace which has cared for him despite his sin. In respect of other men, however, we are faced by many more enigmas than we encounter in our own lot. So that it is only with the greatest caution as well as habitual reserve that we shall venture

to interpret other men's lives by the principle of Divine education. For the influence of any given event on the soul cannot, in the last resort, be taken apart from the personality affected. Far more important than curious reflection on the meaning of God's dealings with others is a serious consideration of the duties we ourselves owe to Him in love.

For the Christian heart there is no question more oppressive than whether those many persons within Christendom, who grow up in an atmosphere physically or morally tainted, have ever had the Gospel really brought so near to them that the inward capacity to receive it has been quickened, or whether there exist thousands who have never had the chance of gaining Christian faith. One who is burdened by this problem will find a solution of it only as it spurs him on to co-operate ardently in the removal of bad moral or social conditions. So also is it with the painful question whether God is simply passing by millions of the heathen, or how far His seeking love rules over their lives also. To the Christian this problem too must become an incentive to join in the work of foreign missions. Our

subject, however, which is specially concerned with the relation of providence and miracle, does not necessitate any discussion of these matters in detail.

Divine providence has unquestionably the character of miracle, in the sense that it implies what is amazing and inscrutable.

Miracle, it is true, is only present if the view of faith is objectively valid. We have seen, however, that the independence and special character of religious experience carries this validity with it.[3]

In the last resort we cannot explain how the two facts can be reconciled, that men are responsible for their actions, while yet these very actions are means and instruments in God's hand for the accomplishment of His will. Even the hatred of Jesus' enemies, without being thereby at all excusable, was forced to serve as a means to the salvation of the world.

Hence it appears to me altogether misleading when Pfister, in the interest of a deterministic theory, asserts a sheer antagonism between the two positions, that God secures this or that by His providential government, and yet that the cause is human

freedom.[4] 'Take,' he says, 'the following example. A believing wife suffers from the unfeeling conduct of her husband. The poor creature is willing to bear her cross, but she believes in indeterminism, and the thought comes: "Not God, but this wretched man is paining me." How can there be quiet and thankful resignation in such circumstances?' To me, on the other hand, it seems clear that both views absolutely *must* be combined—the thought of Divine dispensation and the conviction that her husband is responsible, guilty, free. He could have acted otherwise; he did not require to be unfeeling. Faith in providence becomes a mere dull acquiescence unless hand in hand with it there goes a belief in freedom, in the sense of ability to act otherwise. And how many there are who have maintained a true faith in the providence of God without finding it stifled by belief in the freedom of others who have crossed their path! This holds equally as against Pfister's other examples. The gratitude of a Christian who has experienced a marvellous deliverance is gratitude to God no less than to his human rescuer; no indeterministic theory of freedom can come in

disturbingly with the objection: It is to the free act of this man I owe my deliverance, therefore God cannot be the cause. Just here lies the miraculous character of God's providential government, that, without in the least abrogating man's freedom, He yet achieves His purpose.

It is impossible for us to play the eavesdropper to God in His work of governing the world. In the texture of the cosmos, we cannot distinguish between the threads spun by men and an element He has inserted in the web. Nevertheless, it is wrong to say that everything is explicable by His general arrangement—that eternal, immutable laws obliged all things to fall out in just this way. Rather what we have everywhere is God's special and present action. Each thing is incalculable, amazing—as every great historical event is; and, seen in the light of its significance, it is to be praised as the work of Divine love and power. We cannot simply identify the two things—the action of God, and the empirical events that happen in the world. The equation is particularly false if the conception of natural law be interpreted as capable of bringing under a brief formula the totality

of cosmic processes. For then that conception tends to colour our view of the Divine being and the Divine government. God takes on a rigid and impersonal aspect. It is a misstatement when Schleiermacher affirms that 'the invisible hand of Providence and the action of men are one and the same thing.' [5] Rather it is in and with human action that God manifests His providential government.

We commit the exactly opposite mistake if we regard the action of men and Divine providence as two separate and competing agencies. The ordinary conception of miracle sees God most powerfully at work when He intrudes from above into a world He has forsaken, with the intention of doing some new thing. It seems as if we had to choose between the two possibilities, either to identify God and the world—in which case all would be human, and all at the same time miraculously wrought by God; or to set God and the world in sheer antagonism. On the latter view, God is intensively operative just where no finite cause is at work. Both the denial of miracle and its defence frequently oscillate to and fro between these opposed extremes. And both

theories suffer from the same mistake: the Divine action is construed by means of transparently rational conceptions, so losing its aspect of inscrutability. In the first case—the identification of God and the world—ideas by which we seek to construe the phenomena of the world are taken involuntarily as ideas capable of disclosing to us God's very being, or at all events His methods of world-government. In the second case God becomes a master-workman, who has made His work independent of Himself, yet has occasion now and then to interpose in order to improve it. But so far from identifying God and the world, our thought should rather be that in every event the believer has cause to divine the presence of God's providential action; in the free acts of men, whether good or evil, he sees blessing from above and the process of sin's self-annihilation. But while this faith is objectively valid, we must yet confess our inability to comprehend how, amid the multitudinous crossings of human fortune, God is able to have each single soul personally in sight and to draw near to it perpetually.

The suggestion that we should make a clear

line of demarcation between a man's inner life and his outer is not really satisfactory. It has been maintained, for instance, that God gives to His people such resources of inward power, of endurance, patience, love to man, and believing fidelity, that they triumph over and turn to good whatever may be brought upon them by accident, or the arbitrary course of things, or the malice of others. On such terms miracles would happen solely in spiritual experience, while our external fortunes would be unaffected by God's special providence. But a division of this kind is quite out of harmony with the Christian faith. The suggestion that while the Christian's inner experience is full of proofs of the Divine faithfulness, his outward lot is untouched by special providences, and lies exposed to chance or the rigours of cosmic law, weakens faith in its tenderest spot. It would mean that the believer never could be certain whether his faith were strong enough to bear all his burden. Often he would necessarily be in uncertainty whether chance, or the power of human malice, might not prove too much for his inward resources. Very different is it, if I believe that God's wisdom and love are ruling

even my outward fortunes. I shall not indeed suppose, in that case, that God must necessarily save me from all trouble and conflict; but I shall feel that He sends only such trials as will work out for my salvation.

Nor does it at all harmonise with Christian faith in God to believe that He has more power over the inward than the outward life. It is not clear why it should be easier for Him to exert His authority in man's inner life, while in respect of outer conditions and complications everything must be left to chance or caprice. For it is just our inward life, frequently, that offers Him the greatest resistance. Christian faith in God knows no such opposition between inner and outer. The Divine power and love reveal themselves in both. An incurable dualism, wavering to and fro between faith and the fear of life's mischances, would be the consequence if we had to divide and say: In the life within God aids you in the attainment of trust, fidelity, love to man, integrity; but for the employment of these virtues in the life without, you are cast on your own resources.

Nor does Christian faith find proper expression in the theory which Kreibig [6] and Nagel [7]

have proposed. They try to combine both things—the view that all things have been ordered in God's general cosmic plan, and the convinced assertion of His special miraculous activity. Both are of opinion that we must distinguish between events explicable by God's general world-order and those which are traceable to His special intervention. Many of the enigmas of providence, we are told, simply drop away when we decline to make Him responsible for what is not the result of particular arrangement on His part. For example, if a great calamity, such as an earthquake, destroys more than a hundred thousand people, it has absolutely no connection with God's special providence; the cause is rather the general order of nature, which takes no account of individual need. On the other hand, if in such an earthquake a number of people are miraculously preserved, then, they tell us, this is possibly the result of His special and supernatural interposition.

The distinction suggested by this theory is apparently a very good one. Many events, it maintains, follow from the general order of nature; in that case it is an accident whether this man

or that is implicated. Other events are the outcome of human freedom ; many being traceable to the cunning, craft, or malice of human beings. But now and again God's special action strikes into the cosmic system miraculously, at one point defeats the cunning plans of the wicked, at another changes the order of nature (which also has its source in God), in order to carry out His special purposes, to rescue believers, or to bring swift destruction on the evil-doer. Christian piety, however, can find no satisfaction at all in this three-fold rational distinction. Faith is wounded most painfully if the Christian can only reckon on being under the care of God's personal providence on condition that He strikes into the normal course of things by special acts. If this be so, then in presence of many of life's incidents the believer has no refuge from chance or the craft and malice of his fellows. There can be no assured feeling, in such circumstances, that the everlasting arms are round about him. And equally, all who are not Christians are completely at the mercy of accident, except in so far as from time to time God may interpose supernaturally also in their lives.

On this theory miracle is retained for certain special cases, but particularising acts of Divine care and love are excluded as regards the ordinary course of things. There results the combination: a Deistic view of the world as a rule and a Christian view as the exception. In reality, however, the Divine government of the world, in all its aspects, must be placed full in the light of our Christian faith. Then it wears throughout the aspect of miracle. It is impossible to divide the ground between the general order of the world, human freedom, and the miraculous activity of God.

To recur to the earthquake: none of the persons involved was the victim of chance. Each life brought to a close had its final end according to God's will; one being called away from beneficent activity, another perishing after a misguided life, a third marvellously preserved, a fourth left to mourn the loss of all he loved. What God meant thereby to say to each, none but he who is most nearly concerned can even approximately understand. Those who stand farther off learn primarily the duty incumbent on them to give all the help in their power. But it is not impossible even here

to carry through our Christian conviction that God rules in special wise over each individual life. That His thoughts are never calculable, and are often not intelligible to us, is no ground for denying them; for it is essentially characteristic of Him that His action is inscrutable.

For example, we cannot explain what God desires to teach the man whose nervous system or mental life, owing to sudden calamity, has suffered permanent paralysis or disturbance; nor can we explain why so many die miserably of hunger. In the great majority of cases we can give no reason at all. But it is impossible for us to say that Divine providence has here no relation to the individual person. If such instances make a terribly painful impression on our minds, it is equally certain that every such emotional experience is accompanied by a specially marked stimulation of our faith in God. To deny individual providence would be to affirm that men are utterly forsaken of God in the decisive moments of life.

Only, we ought to refrain from trying audaciously to explain everything by our own ideas, and acting as if Christians had penetrated so

deeply into the Divine plan as to be omniscient. There is an infinite amount of suffering in the world that we cannot understand. Every theodicy has to leave a residuum unexplained and inexplicable. But we must hold to it that interpretations of life which come from the heart and are conceived in the light of the Divine will, however defective they may be in individual cases, are nevertheless true in principle.

We must distinguish between two points of view—on the one hand, an event like an earthquake is to be traced by science to its causes; on the other, it is to be contemplated by individual feeling, and the question asked: What is its effect on the living self-consciousness of each one personally concerned in it? It is here that ethico-religious thought has its place. Its right lies in our inward certainty that it is equally justified with scientific thought, and also that it has to be supplemented by the truth that even in such a disaster the will of God was manifested, speaking personally to the heart of each individual. The two interpretations—the religious and the scientific—are independent of each other. They

do not clash, and hence may claim to exist side by side.

More particularly if we have come to be sure that this earthly life is but a fragment of some wider Divine dispensation, the enigmas which remain lose much of their painful perplexity.

In common life we quite rightly speak of 'accidents'; and even in Luke x. 31, as it happens, the phrase *κατὰ συγκυρίαν*, *i.e.* 'by chance,' is employed quite frankly. The idea of 'chance' implies no opposition to real causality.[8] For example, I meet a friend by chance on a journey. My finding myself precisely at the same spot as he is a fact which on both sides has its causes. Only, I speak of chance when our meeting was not arranged for. Experience is full of such chances. Many of them are unimportant; others are of the greatest influence on our life within and without. And just here is a region where the Christian has special cause to praise God's providential power. Had He merely created the world-order and endued it with a certain measure of goodness and wisdom, then, in every individual experience, we should have occasion to speak of no more than pure accident. To a

Christian, however, it is no accident, but the outcome of special Divine providence, that he has been born precisely in this family, has been given precisely these parents, these brothers and sisters, these teachers, these early impressions. In the broader stream of later life there mingle influences of an always more powerful kind—which play upon us without any co-operation on our part—along with circumstances which we have brought on ourselves, and for which we alone are responsible. In the dispensations sent by God we have more or less found the lesson He desired to teach us; we have used with more or less fidelity the endowments and powers He bestowed. But ever anew there come dealings of God with us which are meant to stir us out of indolent calm, to set before us new tasks, to awaken in us new powers.

Hence, in discussing the miraculous character of Divine providence we are not concerned with the question how God's action is related to the laws of nature, but rather with the question whether accidentally co-operant causes are charged with a higher purpose. In a word, is there such a thing as providence, or is chance the whole?

It is from this point of view that Teichmüller has discussed the question.[9] He shows that study of the world in the light of natural law apprehends the universal only, but can never touch what is individual. Any interpretation which goes simply by natural law must regard the individual fact as matter of chance. He holds that we have no option but either to accept providence, or to believe in 'a brainless God—I mean accident.' How to decide this question is a matter belonging exclusively to the region of personal religious faith. That behind the apparently accidental there rules a higher care, is something I cannot prove to any one who will not believe it. But the view of Christian faith offers no difficulty to a man who, in and through his reverence for the Divine obligations resting on him, has, even if it be only in one experience, become clearly conscious of God's real care and guidance. At all events, for him it can never be proved impossible, absurd, or irrational.

How God is able so to rule events that out of them there result not merely His purposes for the great whole, for the kingdom of God, but also for each individual life that which subserves

redemption (be it warning, admonition, punishment, or conversion, perfecting, strengthening) —this is what our insight cannot follow. God's action can never be observed or overheard, whether in creation or in the government of the world. 'Dein Fuss wird selten öffentlich gesehen' (Gottfried Arnold). Our impression of the Divine providence can be set forth only in a variety of phrases; God (we say) guides, rules, orders, sways all things. Schmidt prefers the expression that God in His providence *groups* events; and he differentiates between ordinary grouping and extraordinary, miraculous intervention.[10] But even the grouping of events is miraculous. Lotze tells us that God has the world-forces and elements in His hand, and exerts influence on them.[11] The older Protestant Dogmatic distinguished by four words—*permissio, impeditio, directio, determinatio*—the varied impressions we receive of the Divine action. It is clear that these are all more or less perfect attempts to describe the mode of God's working, for it is only by means of the specific character of human action, and through our ideas of causality, that the Divine action can be described at all. And yet, by the

nature of the case, it is different from and superior to all human action whatsoever.

If with Pantheism we posit God and the world as identical, all causality energising in cosmic process would at the same time actually represent the working of God. What prevents this identification, however, is principally the fact of evil. Much that happens on earth is antagonistic to God. Certainly it is all divinely overruled, and comes to be embraced under His providence. Thus even what is in antagonism to Him may and must serve His redemptive plan. It is meant to deter the onlooker, to reveal to many the depths of human misery, and, even though it be in such ways as these, to promote the Divine cause. But we shall never be justified in drawing the inference that God has positively ordained evil, even if only as a point of transition on the way to redemption.

All views of the Divine providence are inadequate which do less than justice to the specific nature of the Divine government, as personal and as present in all that happens. If, for example, it is described as not really volitional in character, but rather as like the

functioning of an impersonal law of nature, God is thought of inevitably as a logical idea of causality. His providential rule takes on an impersonal and 'natural' aspect. This is always so when the law-determined order of events is interpreted as if impersonal laws were the really dynamic forces. In that case the conception of natural law so colours the conception of God that He appears not as a Living Will, but as an impersonal cosmic law. It is misleading, also, if from the fact that order is discernible in the Divine action, I draw the inference that it is this order properly which effects things. But the greatest mistake of all is to take the laws of nature—laws which, for definite scientific purposes, I have abstracted from the manifold of being—and construe them as a full and complete expression of the Divine will. It is impossible to regard the concrete human being as but the personification of a number of psychological laws; and just as impossible is it, indeed far more so, to think that the meaning of the providence of God can be exhausted in a series of natural laws teleologically related to each other.

CHAPTER VII

MIRACLE AND THE HEARING OF PRAYER[1]

THERE is no avoiding the question: 'Do you believe that in answer to your prayer God does something He would not have done apart from it?'

It is said that to answer this question in the affirmative is to impair our reverential sense of the Divine majesty. There is felt to be a danger of sinking into heathen ideas of God; since it is heathenish to believe that we can exert an influence upon Him. If we return a positive answer to the question, we are said to be lacking in the proper spirit of submission. We are trying to force upon God our own will, often selfish and often unreasonable. Is the Unchangeable One to alter His good and wise plans to suit the whim of a poor, foolish human being?

In reply to these objections we may concede that faith in the hearing of prayer certainly has sometimes led to error. It has led to

this, that while in every true prayer there is necessarily a combination of confidence and submission, submission has sometimes been overshadowed or been altogether forgotten. It looked then as if prayer had furnished the believer with a magic spell, a power controlling God Himself, so that he could put force upon Him. In that case we have simply the pagan idea—*Deum fatigare*; the man aims at becoming so burdensome to God by persistent petition that finally God yields, simply to get rid of the petitioner. It might seem as though this latter view were present in two passages even of the New Testament—the parables of the importunate friend and of the unjust judge.[2] In both parables the petitions offered are granted merely to put a stop to the insistent vehemence of the request. Yet the principle that we cannot allegorize each separate trait in a parable, admonishes us that in interpreting these parables we should exercise caution. What they convey is not that we can force God, but that we ought to pray perseveringly; and still more, that things take place in response to prayer which would not have taken place without it.

It is objected: God is unchangeable, hence prayer cannot influence Him. The unchangeableness of God, however, must not be allowed to make Him an impersonal Being, a cosmic law, or a logical notion. It in no way conflicts with His immutability that He should enter into mutual fellowship with men; He takes a different attitude to men, according as they do or do not open their inner life to Him. In this way He frequently withholds fellowship from one individual, while He makes another free of all the spiritual fullness of His being. He takes a different relation to the man who prays and to the man who does not pray. If a man opens his heart to God in prayer, quite different Divine influences make their appearance both in his inward and outward life. Prayer clears away obstacles which impede the working of God in our life; it is indeed an essential condition on which God does much that otherwise He would not have done.

The problem of the hearing of prayer is closely related to the problem of freedom. God works in us and through us, but only in the measure in which we put ourselves at His

disposal. Hence it depends equally on our moral action and on our prayer whether God shall open up to us a new future or not. It is not as if we were the first to impose something upon God which did not already have a place in His will, in and for itself. Rather by praying we fulfil the condition with which God has bound up His action. There is no alteration in Him, but there is alteration in His action in the world. When we lay our nature open to God, and work for His kingdom, the whole universe takes on a different aspect.

It is true we must also make room for the principle that all our moral acts and our prayers are, finally, prompted by God. But the mystery of freedom, in its relation to Divine grace, is ultimately insoluble. It is wholly illegitimate, however, to introduce into the conception of God a determinism drawn from the realm of mechanical necessity.

Ultimately, the aim of every prayer is simply to change the course of the world. We must remember that the two ideas, 'the course of the world' and 'God's plan for the world,' have to be clearly kept apart. We bring

mechanical necessity into our conception of God if, out of His unchangeable purpose, we make an unchangeable series of cosmic events. The course of things is never fixed. It is constantly open to modification. It admits of hundreds of different possibilities. Besides, God's will never attains to complete expression in the cosmic sequence. Hence we ought constantly to pray that that sequence may be altered. We ought to and must often do so in the form of a petition that God may 'interpose,' and especially must we pray thus when the actually present course of things is concealing the Divine will from us. Reflective consideration may object later that God was operative even in the actually existing conditions that looked so crushing; only, He was hidden from us. Nevertheless, in the prayer for an 'interposition' there lies the wholly right feeling that the actually existing phase of the universe did not already bear the future within itself by an immanent necessity. Hence we may pray for a new self-disclosure of God, effecting out of His transcendence something other than that which already lies, or seems to lie, enclosed in the determining factors of the world. In-

deed, it is a quite mistaken assumption that the next phase of the universe is already contained in the present one. Rather it is just prayer, and the moral action implied in prayer, as an effort to do God's will, which is the means for bringing about a future answering to God's mind.

The categorical principle that 'whether I pray or not the course of events is exactly the same; my prayer makes not the slightest difference' is one which must exclude or transform all prayer of the nature of petition. On such terms I should never again pray: 'Help me! Save me! Let Thy cup pass from me'; but only: 'Give me power quietly to endure what Thou hast unchangeably decreed.' And yet even this latter prayer implies at bottom that God is able to communicate something to man's inner life which apart from prayer he would lack. If I have inward power and steadfastness the course of events is essentially different from what it would be if I were without these qualities. Human fortunes, whether one's own or those of a family—as well as many other circles beyond—are vitally involved, in all their aspects, when a man cravenly shirks his life-work.

It is very different if even in the depths of distress he is given new faith and energy. The only effect of the view that so far as concerns our outward life God's action takes precisely the same line whether we pray or not, while yet in our inward life we have interpositions on His part, and are strengthened by Him in answer to prayer, is to put certain limitations on the Divine action. It is asserted categorically that God can alter the course of events only in the sense that He produces a change in the mind of the man who is praying, a change which apart from his prayer would not have taken place. But it is not easy to say why we should accept the latter position, and deny the former. If God's relation to the world is an interior one, He must have power to modify much even in a man's outward life, according as he opens his nature to God or remains a stranger to Him.

It is just in the fact that God does sometimes interpose directly in answer to human prayer that Ménégoz finds the truth of belief in miracle. Family experience may be taken as a useful parallel. 'It happens frequently,' he writes, 'that my children ask me for something which I give at their request, but certainly should

not have given had they not asked me for it. Here, then, we have to do no longer with the idea of providence, but with the thought of a special kind of action, different from the regular, normal course of things. And that is the conception of miracle.' [3] 'Miracle is the hearing of prayer. And this hearing takes place without any violation of natural law.' [4] He argues that an abrogation of natural law is impossible. But he is by no means of opinion that the idea of natural law is adapted to interpret the universe completely and without remainder; for he speaks of 'the living God who expresses His will equally in the laws of nature and in His gracious dealings with His children.' [5] Ménégoz' conception appears to me somewhat too narrow only in this respect, that he relates miracle exclusively to the hearing of prayer. 'Such Divine interposition,' he says, 'I expressly differentiate from God's regular activity in providence.' [6] I regard this sharp distinction as untenable.

The assertion that God can alter nothing in the course of the world in answer to prayer only too easily leads on to the logical deduction that, since God is immutable, everything in

the universe remains the same whether I pray or not; nothing new can enter into the cosmic nexus. Consequently not even a prayer for inward strength gains anything from God which would not have been realised apart from prayer altogether. Hence the significance of prayer must be purely subjective. By so praying a man anyhow produces an effect on himself. Prayer is a species of auto-suggestion; a wholesome and necessary species. Of course, this is to deprive it of all meaning. Prayer must gradually fall silent if, under the semblance of speaking to God, it is really only a way of exerting a wholesome influence on one's own mind. Its place will then be taken by contemplation, silent resignation, inward ethical activity. Either prayer is a means by which, notwithstanding all our submission to the Divine will, we can yet obtain something in inward or outward life which we should not have had without prayer. Then it has a real meaning, and it is on this assumption that men have always prayed. Or it has no influence at all, and in that case it is irrational to pray. We shall then do well to train our heart to inward composure, to acceptance of the inevitable.

We may even try to persuade ourselves that we are bound to accept the inevitable joyfully; for behind it stands no impersonal fate, but the Father's loving will. But for us as children to entreat the Father to avert some menacing calamity or bestow some longed-for blessing is meaningless. On this view, however, our resignation to an acceptance of the inevitable is always in danger of sinking into Stoicism; as, for instance, when Marcus Aurelius in his *Meditations* tries to bring himself to mingle a tone of joy with his submission to fate, or as when Spinoza says that his doctrine teaches us 'how we ought to conduct ourselves with respect to the dispensations of fortune, or matters which are not in our own power, and do not follow from our nature. For it shows us that we should await and endure fortune's smiles or frowns with an equal mind, seeing that all things follow from the eternal decree of God by the same necessity as it follows from the essence of a triangle that the three angles are equal to two right angles.' [7] Unquestionably it makes a difference whether behind the inevitable I see an impersonal cosmic law or my Heavenly Father. And yet the face of the Heavenly

Father Himself becomes always more rigid in its lines if each detail of my experience is fixed by inexorable necessity. The more petitionary prayer and the belief that it is really heard are abandoned, or regarded only as the imperfect and anthropomorphic representation of a Divine government following quite other lines, the more there vanishes the distinction between Christian and Stoic resignation, between faith in providence and fatalistic acquiescence.

True, of those who pray many fail in submission to the Divine will. And it is gravely incumbent on every Christian to be clear as to the point that we are not entitled to give voice in prayer to every possible kind of wish that may occur to us. God is Holy and Mighty Love, and all prayers must have it as their highest end that His name be hallowed and His kingdom come. But everything in the way of earthly care or trouble, which may impede the accomplishing of God's will in us or others, ought to be the subject of trustful and submissive prayer. Submission is always proved by our leaving it to God's higher wisdom how He shall help us—and even whether He may not let a particular burden remain for yet a while,

or decide to withhold what we have expressly asked for. Faith, however, is always certain as to the fact that God *can* fulfil the prayer of His child and open to him the gates of a new future.

One who is ever striving to know God's will better, and to fulfil it more faithfully in life, will be always less frequently tempted to ask God for what is either arbitrary or religiously indifferent. The life of prayer, for him, will find its content in the moral tasks set by each successive day.

The view that the hearing of prayer would involve a disturbance of God's world-plan would be right only if the present phase of the universe were a perfect reflection and expression of His eternal love. This, again, it could only be if everything that happens in the world were deducible from the Divine will; if God were equally operative in all misery and all guilt, in the worst malefactor and in the Christian saint. But if He is the all-working Power in all cosmic elements, we must not shrink from the extremest consequences of such a view; we must hold that God brings about the horrors of revolution and of prostitution, the suffering

of the masses, and all human guilt whatsoever, even though later He may introduce what will counteract the frightful resulting devastation. If this be our conception of God and the world, then certainly submission to His will is the only possible attitude. It would be utterly illogical to wish to set any prayer of ours against His wise rule. Even the worst horrors, though they drive us or others to despair, could then only be met with the calmness of resignation; 'this,' we should say, 'this can only be a transition-point in the reign of God's eternal love.' Even the blackest human crime would be necessary, as being grounded in God's creative plan. The ancient Divine word, spoken over creation, that 'it was all very good,' makes change anywhere impossible; everything must take its regular and eternally determined course. No more ought we to pray: 'Make an end, O Lord, make an end!' but only: 'May the eternal scheme of things admit of my so retaining the needful steadfastness and inward power that I may not be crushed by stern fortune, but may gain ever new faith and confidence out of all despair.' Even this resigned calm may, quite inconsistently, pass into a petition for inward

power. But such a petition cannot mean that any new element is to be introduced into the course of things; it is only an anthropomorphic expression for the inward premonition that on misery and guilt there must of necessity follow help and redemption, in accordance with God's immutable plan.

It is very different if I am convinced of the freedom of man, and so unable to deduce evil from the Divine will as a point of transition to the good. For then the present phase of the universe never is the perfect expression of God's will, nor is every particular detail already fixed unalterably in His creative purpose. The truth is rather that through human freedom, and through evil, there enters into the course of things a really mutable element. On the opposite view, submission to God must be considered as identical with submission to the course of nature; whereas, in fact, the two are quite different things. On the view defended here our conception of the world is much more complex, much less purely rational and transparent. The diverse causal series are not traceable to a single fontal power, not equally derivable from God Himself. The will to create,

human sin, and redemption cannot be subsumed under a single eternal Divine act. What abides unchangeable from everlasting to everlasting is the loving will of God. But in this Divine unchangeableness the content of the universe has no part. The view I am controverting so empties the world into the will of God that what really holds only of Him is taken as holding of it also.

God is not equally operative in all cosmic processes. He is present quite differently in Jesus and in Judas. Hence we can only describe His action by saying, anthropomorphically, that at one time He strikes into the world-process, at another withdraws Himself; often He waits until evil is ripe before bidding it go no further. He so groups and orders events as that out of them springs the fulfilment of His purpose. Thus His action requires for its description quite other terms than would be needed to describe the reality of a logical world-idea or the absolute ground of the entire phenomenal universe in time and space. His action cannot be expressed by a metaphysical category or identified with the prevalence of an eternal causal law. For that it is too rich, too

manifold, too complex, too far superior to our conceptions and understanding.

One can see clearly in Schleiermacher how gravely the life of prayer is modified if from the immutability of God is drawn the principle that the course of nature also is immutable.[8] He seeks to prove that the one effect of prayer is to produce inward power and submission. 'If we present to God,' he writes, 'the wish that this or that event may turn out as seems best to us, yet we must consider that we are presenting it to One who is immutable, in whom there can arise no new thought or new purpose ever since the day when the words were spoken: All that I have made is good. What was then decreed will take place: this is a conviction which must come up before us with irresistible certainty.' Now here the Divine immutability becomes all unwittingly a fixed, rigid Medusa-head; the law-determined nature of the world is projected back into the very being of God, and colours the thought of His will. The course of nature appears as an automaton once for all set in motion. And quite consistently Schleiermacher then declares that 'to me it seems a sign of

deeper and more sincere piety if prayer of this sort occurs but seldom in our experience, and even then passes quickly out of the mind.' Petitionary prayer must then tend gradually to disappear, and pass into meditation. But, in fact, this separation of two regions of life, the inner and the outer, is quite impossible. It is a unified world in which we live and work. All that is inward forthwith strives to become outward; and all that is outward exerts a powerful influence on the inward. We must and ought to pray about both; nay, we cannot even attempt the separation.[9]

In point of fact, Schleiermacher himself is of opinion that prayer about external things should not be given up altogether. Man is constantly overtaken by vehement emotions, and cannot always attain to the placid calm of peaceful contemplation, so that petitions about particular things must and ought to come in; but they ought to be mere points of transition.

What discordant strains of thought on this subject are to be met with, often, in writers who undertake to 'reconcile knowledge and faith,' may be clearly seen from the following

words of Wimmer :—'The insight I have gained forbids me ever to pray about things pertaining to the outward life. Yet I cannot desist.' And again : 'I know well that strictly it is a self-contradiction to pray, and yet be conscious that prayers effect nothing. But an inward impulse moves me ; I must do it, if I am to attain the peace and equanimity which I need in my action and reaction on the outward life and its tasks and storms.' [10]

It is well that such contradictions can be borne ; but it is equally clear how strong the interest of faith is in breaking the fetters of a deterministic view of things, as regards life both on its inner and its outer side.

How strongly the idea of the inevitability of the world-process tends to limit prayer may be seen with quite convincing clearness in the argument of August Dorner.[11] He contends that the deeper our insight into the law-determined nexus of the world, the more the sphere of prayer is narrowed. 'We become conscious that what this nexus permits us to do we need not pray for, while that which it vetoes cannot be changed even by prayer, since it is Deity itself by whom the fixed order

has been established.' 'But it would be quite wrong to say that the religious spirit has disappeared in every case where petitionary prayer has been given up;' for such prayer is really practised only by those who have as yet no idea of the cosmic nexus. As soon as we see clearly that, as finite beings, we can neither influence nor understand the Divine world-order, petitionary prayer takes the reduced form of our only praying conditionally, "if it be Thy will," and of our praying unconditionally merely for things of which we know that they are already granted, such as the coming of God's kingdom or the gift of His Spirit. In both cases, however, our interest in prayer disappears. But such conditional prayer is an acknowledgment of providence, and in turn passes over into contemplation.'

It is obvious that if the conception of an absolutely and unequivocally predetermined causal nexus becomes dominant, prayer is absurd. All that then remains is silent resignation, pensive contemplation of our inevitable lot.

It is obvious, too, that those who accept the dogma of an inviolable necessity as ruling all

that happens may and often do derive from it still further consequences, which undermine the life of prayer yet more fundamentally. In a remarkable essay on 'The modification of Christian ideas by the modern conception of the world,' [12] Adolf Metz lays down two brief principles which he finds it quite unnecessary to prove, as being for his mind simply obvious. They are, in fact, only the prejudices of a deterministic view of causality. 'As pivots of the modern interpretation of the world we must take, first, the conception of a causality which pervades the entire world-process, and, secondly, a view of this process which regards it as an uninterrupted evolution. For our purpose here we need not definitely formulate the law of causality. Suffice it that we utterly banish the accidental and arbitrary and assume the law-determined character of all process without exception.' He cherishes the hope that Christianity 'can be included, without inconsistency and without serious loss, in the modern view of the world, as science has been building it up since Copernicus and Spinoza.' But with all this, what becomes of faith in providence and in prayer? The idea of special

providence can have no place in the modern view of things, 'just because we conceive of the world,' he says, 'as an unbroken causal nexus, setting each particular detail in its place with immutable necessity.' Hence no prayer about external things can have any effect. 'But,' he goes on, 'even prayer for moral protection is contrary to our scientific principles. For we assert the same absolute regularity for the inward moral life as for nature.' 'Whether a young lad, late or early, adopts free-thinking views on sexual matters, and thereby becomes exposed to grave moral dangers, depends on accidental circumstances—circumstances predetermined by the causal nexus, and therefore inevitable.' The soul-life itself is subject, equally with external nature, to a strict reign of law. 'Whoever agrees with us moderns in holding absolutely to this law, must give up alike prayer for help in moral difficulties and prayer for daily bread. God gives, God helps only through the causal nexus, with which His will is identical; but His will has no relation to any particular outward needs or wishes on our part.'

From these words one can see clearly how a

thorough-going deterministic view of causality in logic makes all prayer superfluous. For if all the moral power I obtain was already given in the determining factors of the world, there is no sense in my specially praying for it.

CHAPTER VIII

MIRACLE AND HISTORY

VERY frequently we are told that belief in miracle is opposed to all the principles of historical research. Of course it matters a great deal which conception of miracle is meant. Miracles as abrupt acts, with no relation to the context either backwards or forwards, the science of history cannot recognise, for its very life consists in establishing links of connection.

Hume was the first to deal with this question.[1] He started with the definition that 'a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature.' In that case, clearly, thought as such must refuse to accept any such violation. Similarly, if by miracles we mean events which contradict all the analogies of the rest of experience, the suggestion of such events will be resisted to the utmost.

If we take the emotional conception of miracle as fundamental (miracles, *i.e.*, are events with a significance for religion), it is evident that this

is a conception with which history has no quarrel. At the same time, there is bound up with it the metaphysical implication that in miracle an influx takes place, into the world, of transcendent force. God works that which is new, and cannot be explained from the pre-existing factors. As against this, it is held that history cannot admit any such transcendent agency. In fact, however, all that it cannot do is to prove its reality. Historical research can never prove that in this or that given case a miracle has happened, a new instreaming of new life out of the supersensible. Is it said that the very life of history is bound up with the belief in a 'closed causal nexus,' such as would bar out miracle in this sense? Why, each single causal connection has so much that is inscrutable about it that a miracle, the entrance of a creative factor, is quite compatible with the texture of causation. The factors of becoming are so mysterious that miracle emerges within the connected historical process without at all interrupting it. Just as the spiritual miracles of faith, of the hearing of prayer, of regeneration do not violate the causal nexus of human life as it stretches from birth to the grave, so

the Divine revelation in Jesus nowise violates the relations of causality which bind Christianity to Judaism and the religions of the Roman Empire.

Different sciences are guided by different interests in tracing the links of causation. What history is concerned for is to ascertain with all possible clearness the ties which bind us to the past. Religious thought, on the other hand, contemplates the particular incident *sub specie aeternitatis*, and brings out its immediate relation to the eternal. Here also it is quite entitled to affirm the causal relation of the transcendent to particular historical events. *No causal nexus can ever be the ground of the relations in which one event stands to another.* The special interest present in my mind leads me to fix upon different causal relations; for each event is the confluence of scores of causal sequences, none of which excludes the others. A closed nexus of causation, rendering miracle impossible, would be presented only if I held the false deterministic view, according to which every event is so completely and unequivocally determined by the sum of the efficient factors that when they are given it is sufficiently given

also. But this is really to deny all becoming, all new elements as such. Miracle is already present in the mystery of all becoming; it is not excluded, but included, by the causal nexus of history. If religious faith is capable of regarding each single event as miraculous, there must exist a possibility that every such event means a new influx from the transcendent. It is not merely in great phenomena like the Person of Jesus that we can point to 'gaps in the causal texture'; rather in *every* nexus there emerges something new, something that may and ought to be interpreted, in a religious point of view, as metaphysically miraculous.

Religious faith, in so far as it involves historical interpretation, is chiefly interested in asserting miracle at the great decisive moments of the history of the world, in showing, *e.g.*, that the Person of Jesus is not completely explicable by the religion of His time. The guiding interest of history is exactly the reverse. Yet they in no way conflict. Quite illegitimately Troeltsch tries to eliminate the difference, by forcing a historical method on Dogmatic.[2] Now Dogmatic in no way denies that Bible religion as a whole is mutually

related to non-Biblical faiths. But it cannot always enter upon these relations; for at this point the interests of the two disciplines diverge. It is very good and very desirable that research in comparative religion should bring to light more precisely those links of influence which formerly were often ignored. An irreconcilable antagonism would only arise if scholars on that side were to maintain that in the Jahve-religion, for instance, there is nothing not previously found in Babylon; in Jesus, nothing not already given in the Talmud, or in Stoicism, or in the mysteries; or, to put it otherwise, that Christianity is no more than the summation of all these previous factors. If by 'the closed causal nexus' is meant this theory—acknowledging as it does no real becoming, nothing new, but only the summation of elements already in existence—then certainly Christianity must protest against such a theory to the utmost. And in doing so, it will be supported by all sound views of history, as also by every philosophy which reflects carefully on causality, on becoming, and on development, as well as on that 'creative synthesis' which we encounter even in the spiritual

life of the individual, but most of all in history.

One or two examples will make this clearer. F. C. Baur begins his Church history with the question: How is it with the miraculous beginning of Christianity?[3] Of the conception of a Divine Incarnation as held by the Ancient Church he says that 'he who regards this as simply and absolutely a miracle, steps at once outside of all historical connection. Miracle is an absolute beginning, and since as such it must needs qualify all that follows, the whole series of phenomena which fall within the range of Christianity must bear the same miraculous character. Historical connection having once been severed at the outset, the same interruption of the historical process is equally possible at any further point.' There are serious exaggerations here. Even the view taken by the Ancient Church, with all its emphasis on the miracle of Incarnation, in no way severed the connection of Jesus with Judaism. In miracle, indeed, there is no break or severance of any kind. It springs rather from an interpretation, coloured by emotion, of the fact that a new element has entered history. The

Church's conception of the Incarnation of God is a certain interpretation of this new element, not previously given in the factors of the development. The interest of the historian in the matter is excellently put by Baur, when he proceeds: 'Thus, on the part of those who are interested in the scientific study of history, the desire has naturally arisen to show how the miracle of the absolute beginning may itself be regarded as a link in the chain of history, and to resolve it, so far as the case admits, into its natural elements.' [4] For scientific history, this interest is wholly natural and essential. And even the limitations of this view are admirably marked by the words, 'so far as the case admits.' What fixes the limit is the originality of personal life. We encounter this originality, not in the Person of Jesus merely, but in all the great personalities of the world. The more Jesus' Person overtops all others, the more emphasis must history lay on its mystery and its elemental quality. But religious thought is guided by another interest than history, and follows other lines of reflection. If history is led to speak of elemental quality, originality, mystery, religion on its part has the right to

say—here is the wonder of wonders: 'God manifest in the flesh.' Neither view bars out the other.

Let us now ask how far Baur carried his attempt to resolve the miraculous origin of Christianity, 'so far as the case admits,' into its natural elements. How far is this possible? He points to the universal world-empire of Rome, to Greek philosophy after Socrates, to Judaism, to the Essenes, the Therapeutae, and the religious philosophy of Alexandria.[5] Christianity, he finally sums up, 'is the natural unity of all these elements.'[6] 'On what grounds then can we regard Christianity itself as a phenomenon purely supernatural, as an absolute miracle introduced into the world's history, without the operation of any natural causes, and therefore incapable of being comprehended as belonging to any historical connection, when we find, in every direction, wherever we turn, numerous points of connection and affinity in which it is linked with the most intimate bonds to the whole history of the development of mankind?' I do not think that this position has ever been gainsaid, for no one will assert that we have in Christianity 'a phenomenon

purely supernatural,' 'an absolute miracle.' No one will question that there were points of connection and contact and affinity. But the decisive issue is whether Christianity is so absolutely conditioned by all these factors as to be only a summation of them. Or is there a 'creative' synthesis? Baur goes very near to acceptance of the former view. In his pages the significance of the original personality of Jesus recedes much too far into the background. Of Christianity he writes that 'it contains nothing that was not conditioned by a series of causes and effects going before; nothing that had not been long prepared in different ways, and carried forward towards that stage of development at which we find it in Christianity; nothing that had not been previously recognised in one form or another, as a necessary result of reasoned thought, or as a need of the human heart, or as a requirement of the moral consciousness.'[7] That Christianity was prepared for, that lines of causation lead to it from classical antiquity, no one will deny. Later research has proved it in far more exact detail than Baur himself. But miracle would only be excluded if Christianity were absolutely

dependent on all these factors, or rather contained in them. This, however, neither Baur nor any one else has been able to prove.[8] What he assumes, and then refutes, really is the false Thomist conception of miracle. A miracle which should enter the world's history abruptly, or without points of contact, is certainly quite inconceivable, whether from the historical point of view or any other.

Zeller followed Baur with a reasoned argument as to the science of history and the miraculous. Fundamentally, he repeated the ideas of David Hume. He too set out with a false idea of what miracle is. He regards it as the abiding merit of the Tübingen school that their investigations of early Christianity went definitely on the principle that miracles do not happen. 'Miracle and historical study are inconsistent; and he who aims at history can never admit miracle.' [9] For Zeller also miracles are events which are not due to natural causes and which—this is a subordinate feature [10]—contravene the laws of nature. The law of the indissociable nexus of natural causes and effects —a law valid for every department of existence —cannot, he holds, be inapplicable solely to the

department of Biblical history. 'A miracle,' he writes, 'is an event contrary to all the analogies of experience.'[11] Hence, given a miraculous narrative, it is always more probable that the narrator erred than that something took place which is in conflict with all analogies.

These arguments led to an interesting debate between Zeller and Ritschl.[12] It revolved round the conception of miracle, the principle on which particular Biblical miracles are to be rejected or accepted, and the question whether the origins of Christianity were supernatural.

It was a somewhat unsatisfactory discussion, for each of the controversialists had a different idea of what miracle is. So their arguments mostly missed each other. Zeller sought to prove that events are impossible which conflict with natural law and the analogies of experience; Ritschl aimed at showing that miracles are events closely bound up with faith in providence.

All that Zeller appears to me to have made out is that events are unthinkable which contradict the analogies of all possible experience. It is true we must use the idea of experience with great caution. For example,

in the experience of most moderns there is nothing corresponding to the ecstatic and visionary experiences related of the prophets of Israel, as also, *e.g.*, of Mohammed, or to the phenomena in primitive Christianity known as speaking with tongues. It is to be considered that the mental life of man has undergone great changes in past centuries, and is still changing continually. If then ecstasy and vision fall for us outside the range of our ordinary present experience, it is not for that reason to be denied that an experience widened by historical knowledge might not have seriously to take just such phenomena into account.

Can we now, apart from scrutiny of sources altogether, arrive at any specific criterion showing whether a given miraculous narrative does or does not possess historical significance? Zeller lays down a canon of this kind; a canon which, he maintains, must be taken as axiomatic for historical criticism, and made the basis of all investigations into detail. It is that 'a miracle is an event in conflict with all the rest of our experience.' With a miraculous narrative before him, therefore, the historian must always hold to the probability that

nothing can have taken place contrary to the analogies of experience, and hence that the story as told by tradition is false. But Zeller's conception of miracle is untenable. For him miracles are events which violate natural law. His reference to the analogies of experience, it is true, implies a principle we employ instinctively, and must needs employ. Only, in using the conception of 'experience' we ought not to overlook the analogies of *religious* experience. Hence, quite apart from inquiry into sources, we must reject as impossible the idea that waves can ever have stood upright (Exod. xiv. 22; Josh. iii. 16), simply because we learn from history elsewhere, as also from the experience of believers, that it is not in this particular way that God saves. And thus, even apart from investigation of the sources, our surmise will be that later tradition has heightened into something unnatural an event in which those involved saw the hand of God. This canon of 'the analogies of experience' we apply instinctively to the Old and New Testaments. True, it is a principle which does not suffice in every case to inform us as to what actually took place. That cures have been wrought not merely in

those whose suffering was mental, but in the lame, even in the blind, and under certain conditions actually in lepers, is corroborated by history; instances, *e.g.*, are the cures associated with Catholic pilgrimages, or those vouchsafed to men like Blumhardt.[13] It is not to be doubted that Divine apparitions have been experienced in prophetic ecstasies, in visions, and in dreams, or that the Divine has been beheld as present under the guise of sense.

As against Zeller, it was contended by Ritschl that we must start with the religious conception of miracle, which is that miracles are events recognised by faith as acts of God. We ought not to criticise them primarily by the idea of natural law. The historian, said Ritschl, is not in a position 'to ascertain from the particular details of the record of past miracles what the general principles of cause and effect permit us to say actually took place.' 'Thus miraculous narratives are incommensurable with scientific history.'[14] Zeller rejoined that this is 'a convenient vagueness, neither acknowledging the supernatural nor rejecting it.' Ritschl, he said, was a theologian, 'too well educated to believe in miracles and too cautious to deny

them.' [15] And in point of fact Ritschl's position is not quite clear.[16] From the fact that in the case of certain Biblical miracles inquiry is ultimately faced by impenetrable problems, he draws the conclusion that all the miracles of Scripture are incommensurable with scientific thought.

Finally, however, Ritschl conceded to Zeller that 'events in nature which contradict natural law are certainly scientifically inconceivable by us.' [17] But this canon, he added, is quite useless in enabling us to make out what really happened. And in many cases this is actually so. At the same time, Zeller justly argues that there are a number of incidents where we can say with very considerable certainty: This alleged event is impossible, for it collides with known natural laws. If, then, natural laws, though formulated by us, represent ordinances of God, we are bound to regard them as inviolable. Religion has nothing to object to such a principle. It will only impair our faith in God if we take natural law as a complete expression of His will. Now experience tells us that at the present day God realises His purposes without ever abrogating or violating the

ordinances He has established. It is therefore natural to suppose that He has never done so or required to do so, since He is able to accomplish His will without abrogation of the natural order. The phrase 'breach of natural law' is, indeed, as much a *contradictio in adjecto* as it would be to talk of a weightless stone. The idea of 'natural law' is a creation of the human mind, formed, of course, under the compulsion of facts; and to negate this mental creation would be tantamount to giving up logic altogether. Nature is always at God's disposal. How He goes about to execute His will in it and through it is unknowable for us. What we actually perceive, however, is that in attaining His purpose He need not suspend His own ordinances. And therefore we judge that His procedure has never varied. The world of nature has a much greater stability than the mental life of man. Hence the difference is not that God once produced effects in nature by a different mode, but that at different times His acts have been differently perceived.

It is indeed true that we cannot make out in each particular instance what does and what

does not harmonise with natural law, for we are very far from knowing all the forces of nature. Still, in many cases we are justified in holding that this or that particular event, had it actually occurred, would have been an abrogation of law.

That bread should multiply in the hands of the disciples, in the course of distribution, would rescind the law by which corn only comes into existence through a process of growth; similarly with the turning of water into wine. Jesus' walking on the sea would nullify the law of gravity. Apologetic attempts to explain miracles of this kind, apart from such nullification, must all be regarded as failures. Augustine, indeed, speaks of an accelerated nature-process, suddenly producing that which on the normal principles of organic life takes place by slow degrees.[18] But an accelerated process which, in the absence of any organism, should change water into wine, simply cancels the order of nature. Beth regards the abrogation of natural law as an impossibility, and attempts nevertheless to explain the miracles of feeding and the change of water into wine without any interference with law; accord-

ingly, he argues that the substances forming bread may have been present in the atmosphere and the earth, and may have come together by the extraordinary act of God.[19] Even Seeberg will not altogether reject this theory, regarding it as a fit subject for discussion.[20] But such Divine action would conflict with all the analogies of experience. The theory is really an *ad hoc* artificial device. Our religious experience, as well as history, shows clearly that God often uses miraculous means to feed the hungry, to heal the sick, and to save from danger. But that He should multiply bread in the hand, change water into wine, or send angels to deliver men from prison is something of which we have no experience. The mode in which His miraculous help comes is different. Hence we deem it probable that when, in the Gospel story, the multitude was miraculously fed (Mark vi. 30-44, viii. 1-10), the loaves were not multiplied in the disciples' hands, that at the marriage in Cana (John ii. 1-11) the water was not turned into wine, nor did Jesus walk on the waves of the sea of Galilee (Mark vi. 48). *In themselves, of course, even miracles of this kind are possible for Divine omnipotence. But*

the rest of our religious and historical experience shows that it is not in this way God is wont to deal with us. Hence it must remain doubtful whether God has ever wrought events of such a kind in the course of redeeming history.

At this point, it is true, the paths of different thinkers separate. Seeberg considers it mistaken to say that God's modes of working have always been the same. He holds that the men of to-day no longer require miracles of sense. But long ago God wrought in other modes, for in those times the language of sense was necessary.[21] He differentiates two classes of miracle: those of which we have experience now, and those which no longer happen. 'These outward miracles of sense,' he writes, 'do not really occur now. Thousands are not miraculously fed, or the storm miraculously stilled, or paralytics healed by a word, or dead men raised to life again. The sporadic and unverifiable cases of miraculous cure often adduced to the contrary are—on the whole—quite unconvincing, and must be put aside.'[22] 'In working miracles God condescended to the human level, and came to meet the human need by bringing heavenly things near in terms

of sense. As there was a time when men knew only capitals, and even the greatest genius must use this clumsy script to express his thought; so God, the great educator of mankind, could then speak only in the black-letter of miracle.'

It seems to me that this is to exaggerate the difference of the times. We need the present activity of God as much as did the age of the apostles; not in our inner life merely, but in our outward life we need clear and sure tokens of His helpful and redeeming love. Nay, we need such tokens far more keenly, if the dogma of an unalterable causal nexus is not to crush the soul. In point of fact, too, every Christian has experience of wonderful dispensations in which the voice of God makes itself heard. What lies at the basis of Scriptural miracles, indeed, is simply an experience of God's saving aid, felt and known even in the outward life of man. And since we have the same experience, it is impossible for us to place an absolute gulf between the miracles of Bible times and of to-day. Rather we must interpret Bible miracles by the analogy of what happens to religious men now. It is this which really gives them a value for us. And this means that we ought

not—as Seeberg proposes—to push aside the analogy of miraculous cures at the present day.

A deeper reason why Seeberg and others shrink from applying modern analogies to Bible miracles is the fear lest the Biblical narratives should be made to appear largely incredible, or Biblical writers come to be thought of as having allowed their fancy to transfigure many of the facts. Seeberg thinks that 'in that case the apostles, though no doubt penetrating the deep things of God, must have turned very dim eyes upon the actual world.'[24] But this is erroneous; for what lies at the foundation of most of the miraculous records is the true conviction that God has been manifested in Christ and is carrying out His will alike in the world of spirit and of sense.

Would Seeberg maintain that Jesus Himself and His disciples viewed reality with but dim eyes because they saw demons at work in the mentally afflicted, and expelled them? Certainly not. Here, then, is an unmistakable instance of a belief taking shape in the language and thought-forms of the time. The 'black-letter,' telling of demons in its 'capitals,' is

the script used by Jesus and the early Christians. And if we find this happening in regard to events of so much importance, how can we blame the writers of the New Testament if they used their 'black-letter' to record miracles of every kind, and so gave a somewhat ruder prominence to the supernatural?

That God has spoken through Christ as through the prophets; that by this Divine revelation a certain stream of history was initiated, and that in the course of this history Divine effects—mediated in miraculous modes and by deeds of power—have been caused in the world both of spirit and of sense, and have met with real understanding: all this remains true. We are far from rejecting all miracles; a great number of supernatural cures may well be taken as having occurred almost exactly as they are related. In the case of raisings from the dead, the nature of the fact renders it impossible to ascertain whether life had wholly departed or not. In the latter case, the analogies of experience would exclude actual resuscitation. But indeed Seeberg does not contend that *all* miracles must be received as having happened precisely as they are recorded;[25] so the

question resolves itself into a matter of a greater or less degree of historical criticism. The principle that we must go by the analogies of experience still holds. It is not a case of God's acting differently then and now, but of a different perception of His action, and a different interpretation. The modes and forms in which He works are viewed differently at different times. For example, it cannot be questioned that in days when dreams were regarded as premonitory, religious men might well believe that they had had Divine communications through dreams. Cases are constantly happening in the mission field to-day, where natives relate that it was through a dream they were enjoined to visit a mission station. It is in this sense form that the Divine action has been perceived. So again, sensible theophanies must often have a real basis. Thus we may say that God is (as it were) condescending to the human level, speaking to men in the language they understand. And yet, after all, what is different is not the Divine action, but the modes and forms of human soul-life; these last really determine what of the Divine power and working is apprehended. Man's soul-life changes in history far more

rapidly than the much more stable outward forms of nature-process. Hence we must suppose that the Divine operation in nature remains the same now as two thousand years ago. An age which held striking events in nature to be not impossible might easily, when observing God's wondrous deeds, heighten their striking aspect. So in reproducing what they had experienced they called in, by way of explanation, factors such as they had felt to be at work elsewhere. Thus we can understand the reports of angelic apparitions which occur in many stories. Just as demons were taken to be the real agents in many kinds of sickness, so when extraordinary occurrences took place, the actual contact of man with the heavenly world was sensibly represented under the form of an angelic apparition.

Yet after all there remains the main question, regarding which the minds of men usually diverge most. If we have the final revelation in the person of Jesus, a revelation not adequately explicable by the previous history of religion, we cannot but ask whether it is not easily intelligible that, in the case of this unique personality, the standards of Divine

action should transcend what is customary elsewhere? If Jesus held Himself the Bearer of salvation for all mankind (Matt. xi. 25 ff.), if He was sure that in Him there had been given the final and sufficient revelation, is it not probable that at still other points in His life there were extraordinary incidents which outgo the analogies of experience elsewhere?

That aspect of His person which transcends all human measures is the fact that He has gained eternal significance as the Mediator of salvation for men in every age. His individual acts surpass all analogies in so far as He represents Himself as the Bearer and Mediator of redemption. Similarly, His life of prayer, His obedience to God, and His love for His enemies go beyond all other parallels in moral action. But in the narratives of His life we meet with a small, isolated number of singular acts—His walking on the sea and the like—which have but a loose connection with the picture of His character as a whole. Just here, accordingly, we must be guided by analogies with His action in general. His aid is ordinarily given without the suspension of the natural order; we must suppose, therefore, that He

would not three or four times break through a Divine order which held good even for Him throughout His whole life.

Especially at this point there comes into view His resurrection, which, as the really crowning and basal miracle, is felt to sustain all the rest.[26] Its position is not of that isolated kind which characterises individual miracle-stories of the Old and New Testaments. Rather it is of fundamental importance for the whole history of the world.

For it is on faith in the resurrection of Jesus that the Christian religion is built. Without this faith, His disciples could not have been sure of victory. From it first they drew the confident trust that Jesus had not remained under the power of death, but was entered into heavenly glory. It was this certainty which first gave the disciples courage to face the world with the message of Christ. On this foundation, therefore, the Church of Christ is fixed. For those who believe in Christ the resurrection of Jesus supplies the irrefragable guarantee of eternal fellowship with God, which, apart from the person of Jesus and His resurrection, must always have been exposed to doubt. Here

scientific history must end in the position that the resurrection first made the disciples' faith complete. The first Christian preaching was a preaching of the resurrection (Acts ii. 24 ff.). Paul, the first Epistle of Peter, the Epistle to the Ephesians — all find in the resurrection the basis of Christianity. Apart from it the Christian hope would have remained uncertain, and the Christian faith vacillating and irresolute.

We are confronted by the undoubtedly historical fact that after Jesus' death a number of His disciples, partly as individuals and partly in groups, had vouchsafed to them wonderful appearances of the Lord, certifying to them His rising from the dead. In this way their sunken faith revived; they became sure that God had given witness to Jesus, that death was not the last word with which His life had ended. It is equally certain that none of Jesus' enemies saw the Risen One. Alike for Paul (1 Cor. xv. 4-9) and for the Evangelists these appearances are the really important and decisive fact. Paul puts his vision of Christ near Damascus on the same plane as the earlier appearances to the disciples. Unique as these experiences

are, and in spite of the fact that they contain an irreducible element of mystery and inexplicability, our minds cannot but turn to certain analogous facts in history. He who sees in the visions of the prophets not mere subjective phenomena, but a real intercourse with a higher world, must also believe that the appearances of Christ represent a real intrusion of the transcendent, or, more precisely, of the living Christ risen from the dead. Thus even F. C. Baur felt himself compelled to speak of miracle at this point, inasmuch as 'no psychological analysis can penetrate to the inner spiritual process in the disciples' consciousness, in virtue of which their despair after Jesus' death passed into faith in His resurrection.' [27] Particular questions as to the modes and ways in which it was possible for Jesus to manifest Himself to them must of course remain dark, for what is supersensible escapes, by the very nature of things, from the tests of scientific inquiry. But at the basis of these appearances there lies a real fact. History may content itself with establishing the fact of visions. But it is the interpretation of faith that these visions were not purely subjective, but the

appearance of a transcendent reality; and this interpretation is wholly right and necessary. At the same time it is an interpretation I cannot force on the historian.

How Jesus' form of being passed out of one that was earthly and corporeal into one higher and more than earthly, is a problem beyond our analysis and knowledge, for observation is here impossible. It is probable that Christian opinion will always exhibit two forms of the idea—one more concrete, asserting a miraculous transfiguration of the earthly body; the other more spiritual, holding that Christ, laying aside the body, was transfigured in heavenly glory.

For history this is an insoluble problem. History ends by registering the fact that faith in the resurrection was the basis of the Church. But other considerations come into play.

The reanimation of Jesus' body would be really essential, as a fact fundamental to faith, if the future resurrection of all believers necessitated a reanimation in their case also of the body which had been laid in the grave. Were this so the basal fact of the bodily resurrection

of Jesus would represent the first beginning of what will happen in eternity to all who believe in Him. If the Christian hope involved a resuscitation of the buried body, then Jesus' resurrection too would have to be conceived of as a bodily one. As a matter of fact, a number of theologians still take this line.

But the reanimation of a body which had been dissolved into its atoms and had passed into other organisms and other combinations is an idea surrounded with such difficulty that it is impossible to burden our Christian hope with it. The hope of resurrection does not depend on the idea of reanimation, even though we refuse to believe in a future existence merely of the soul. So, too, the idea of a bodily resurrection in Jesus' case is not the only possible form our faith may take.

I shall not enter here upon the wide field of historical inquiry, my chief aim being merely to clarify ideas. Historically, the main ground for believing that, when Jesus rose from the grave and ascended to glory, His body was left behind, as an organ of earthly life which could henceforth be dispensed with, is the parallel between the appearance of Christ

to Paul and that to the first disciples (1 Cor. xv. 4-9); and, in addition, the divergences of tradition in regard to the resurrection appearances themselves. Even on this view the resurrection still retains its fundamental importance. It creates the confident faith that Jesus, as a person, was perfected in God; that He lives on in eternal power, and thereby gives to His people the guarantee of an eternal fellowship with the Father.

Many recent writers have dwelt upon similar considerations; and our guiding principle, as it seems to me, must always be the endeavour to apply the analogies of experience as a whole. Only where there is no possibility of doing so are we bound to conclude that what we have before us is a quite unique fact, which has only once in history come to light in this form.

CHAPTER IX

MIRACLE IN RELATION TO CAUSALITY AND NATURAL LAW

In treating of the problem of miracle it is impossible to rest satisfied with a solution which runs somewhat as follows.[1] The conception of miracle, it is said, expresses the emotional significance of a certain event, its relation to our religious experience. On the other hand, in investigating the same event for the purposes of knowledge, we have to take into account solely its relations to other events. I maintain, on the contrary, that the element of knowledge latent in the conception of miracle must have justice done to it. This element is the perception that there is a working of God, immediate and personal, not merely in the life of spirit but in that of sense. There is an ever new influx of the supramundane Divine life into the world of sense and sight. There are aspects of sensible existence which disclose themselves only to religious experience. Now here we seem to

come upon an insoluble antinomy. Religion cannot part with such ideas as those of 'intrusion' or 'interposition.' It must always continue to speak of an influx of Divine life into the visible world—not into the world of spirit only, but also into that of matter. At this point the conflicts of opinion are grave and deep-reaching. The conceptions with which natural science and history operate are very far from being adapted to admit of such intrusions, such perpetually renewed instreamings of Divine life. Nature, it would appear, is the exclusive domain of natural science. But science is bound to decline not merely the contradictory notion of 'the abrogation of natural law,' but also every suggestion that a transcendent factor may act within the realm of nature. Apparently, then, the only way of escape is to use the old formula that God works solely through the laws of nature. They are His ordinance. But this solution wholly fails to express the specific character of Divine action. It makes God's working rigid and impersonal. Hence in opposition to this theory a living religion must always insist that in addition God works upon nature by special and extraordinary acts. In

short, what we have here is a revival of the Thomist idea of miracle. And the outcome, apparently, is a helpless and inextricable tangle of difficulties which gives the whole problem an aspect of hopeless confusion. It is then very intelligible that many should despair of a solution, and fall back on the plan of simply putting the two interpretations side by side. And for practical life this plan is the right one. But theology, on the other hand, is in duty bound to clarify men's ideas. Powerful thinkers like Herrmann stop at the acceptance of an antinomy between religious and scientific thought, in the hope that from that very circumstance faith may draw vital force.[2] But in less powerful natures such an antinomy may end either in a strangling of religion or in a standing protest against the accredited methods of scientific research.

It is not the conception of nature only, however, or of natural law, which seems to exclude miracle of every kind, but a more comprehensive idea, and one valid equally for the realm of nature, of spiritual life, and of history. I mean the idea of causality. In detail this idea is very variously conceived.[3] The only possible, and

the only clear, idea seems to me that 'cause' should stand for the 'liberating' energy in nature.[4] In that case, we get rid *ab initio* of the principle that *causa aequat effectum*; a principle impossible to carry out in any field whatever. Not merely do we have causal non-equations in the field of history, as Rickert has steadily urged, but even in the field of nature. It is radically confusing to make the law of the conservation of energy the type of all causal relations, and draw the inference that where there is causality everything must have remained the same. On the contrary, every relation of cause and effect exhibits a constant inequality. Even in transformations of energy, of whatever kind, cause and effect are unequal. True, the sum of the energy present has remained the same; but the effect is quite different from the cause. And it is arbitrary to say that we shall name 'effect' only that which has remained self-identical.

The human mind is led to form the ideas of cause and effect because we ourselves, in acting, become conscious of our ability to produce effects. 'For the organic,' it has been said, 'causality is real; for the inorganic, it is only

interpretation.' 'We experience causality; for we experience our wills and we experience our limbs, while we also experience the fact that our will moves our limbs.' 'We interpret the world as we do our own limbs; for by the known we interpret the unknown.' [5] What is best known to man is his own ability to act; hence he explains inorganic nature by projecting into it this known element, and thus originally conceives of clouds and winds, streams and woods, rain, thunder and lightning, as possessed of 'souls.' Even in the apparently so unpersonified conception of 'force,' we moderns have obviously preserved a relic of the fact that we have come to argue from the known—our own power—to the unknown, viz. the causes of motion in nature.

But there is no such thing as an equivalence of cause and effect. There is complete inequality between the prick of a needle and the resultant sensation of pain. Or take an instance. A servant brings in a telegram: 'Antwerp. Jonas and Co. have failed.' Up leaps the merchant and calls to the servant: 'Tell James to put in the horses.' He then drives to the exchange and to business friends,

in order to secure his own position.[6] Here is an utter absence of equality between cause and effect. It is the task of history to trace the causal connections of the past, but no historian will maintain that the effect contains nothing new in comparison with the cause.[7] Rather it is the new element which provokes inquiry. And when we have ascertained the causal nexus, we do not say: Here all remains the same as it had been, but rather: Here new elements have arisen.

There is a false view of cause for which 'a cause is the sum of all the relevant conditions.' Along with this conception goes the principle that every event is completely and unequivocally determined by the sum of its conditions. Hence each event is the necessary result of all the conditions bearing on it. On this view a sharp conflict with religious faith becomes at once inevitable. For faith is sure, and lives by the assurance, that at each moment God can open up a new future, not derivable from the present phase of the universe. It is not merely that faith holds this of certain decisive episodes in the history of redemption, affirming, *e.g.*, that Jesus is not the product of the antecedent

religious history, nor the religion of Jahve a product of Semite-Babylonian religion. Nay, faith insists that *for me*, at each successive moment, a new instreaming of transcendent power is possible. Here too, then, we seem to have a sharp contrast between faith and one of the fundamental categories of thought. A universal causal nexus, an unbreakable chain of cause and effect—this appears to be a necessary postulate of science. Faith, on the other hand, insists that this chain is being constantly broken through, and that God intrudes directly into the phenomenal world. In short, at every point the fundamental conceptions of modern thought and faith appear to be in antagonism.

In view of this, let us try one 'reconciliation of knowledge and faith' which has often been tried and also very highly extolled. Faith, it holds, ought simply to recognise the alleged law of thought, and add only that the inviolable causal nexus is so gloriously and grandly based in God's eternal wisdom that at each moment it brings to pass exactly what has been unalterably determined on by Divine providence! In that case, however, all things are necessary in the same sense; they are willed and wrought

by God, even sin. We may console ourselves by believing that sin is wrought by God only as a transition-stage. He works in Jesus, and in Judas also. I do not see how one can escape the inference drawn by Paul Rée with ruthless logic: 'If yesterday thou didst lie, then the disposition of atoms in the primitive nebula would have had to be other than it was, if that lie of thine was not to happen.' It is easy to be deceived as to what is logically implied here, particularly if we ignore the difference between the two positions—first, that in all events, and even in sinful acts, God reveals Himself, in part as power to bless, in part as power to judge; and secondly, God effects each detail by means of universal necessity. This latter view, which is false, carries over to God ideas borrowed from empirical science, and thereby turns His action into an impersonal fate.

What extraordinary views have been taken of the principle of causality! Out of a category of the understanding, necessarily applied to the world of phenomena, men have created a principle of universal explanation, which is to solve all mysteries. But the principle of causality is

simply that each event must have its cause or causes. Often, however, it is further taken to mean that each event is so completely and unequivocally determined by the totality of its conditioning causes that it must *necessarily* happen. From this it follows that any given phase of the universe is the inevitable result of the preceding. With an inexorable necessity the present situation makes way for its successor. No man or God can in the least alter this. And so God's interposition in the world, and the creation of new potencies, are alike completely barred. And this means, further, that the entire later world-process has come, with logical necessity, out of the initial state of the cosmos. My own existence, my errors and failures, my penitence and conversion, my outward fortunes and my inner character—all lay potentially wrapped up in the condition of the world, at a time when as yet there were neither men nor organisms; so wrapped up that they not only might, but necessarily must, emerge.

What God wills, necessarily happens. This principle we find in Augustine[9] as in Luther.[10] And it is quite unobjectionable if between

God and the individual's experience we do not insert the empirical necessity of things as the means by which the Divine plan is executed. That would be to tinge the content of the Divine will with the hue of mechanical necessity.

Very frequently the 'principle of causality' [11] is so interpreted *ab initio* as to yield a universal philosophy, a metaphysical determinism.

Thus, for example, Otto Liebmann argues that 'like causes always lead to like results.' [12] Were the same combination of conditions to recur, it would give rise to the same result. This, he holds, is the scientific view of causation. It is a principle which makes all chance, accident, or exception to the rule impossible. 'If this principle is correct, then the whole course of things, the entire succession of cosmic phases, is unequivocally and necessarily fixed beforehand, and we have a universal determinism.'

This is passing strange! The categories of necessity and possibility are equally native to the human reason; yet the first category is so to take precedence of the second as to become all-powerful.

Clearly, then, with the hypostatisation of the category of causality both the liberty of man and the free rule of God become impossible. Divine freedom had scope only at the commencement of the world-process. It is possible that a free Divine volition is responsible for the fact that the world, together with the actual changes of energy initiated within it, should be just of this particular character. But, subsequently to that one free act on God's part, everything has taken place with absolute necessity. At present He is only a spectator of the cosmic process inaugurated by Him long ago. Whether He is or is not interested in what happens makes no difference at all to its happening. In either case what emerges is what was put into the process by God's eternal ordinance.

The Stoics long since drew this conclusion with an admirable lucidity. From the universal validity of the law of causality they deduced the iron necessity of all that happens, and declared that all things are ruled by an εἱμαρμένη or fate. They too based belief in fate on the law of causality: 'all that takes place must by necessity proceed from the causes conditioning

it.'[13] Nothing happens without a sufficient reason, and under the given circumstances nothing can fall out otherwise than has actually been the case: *τὸ μηδὲν ἀναιτίως γίγνεσθαι, ἀλλὰ κατὰ προηγουμένας αἰτίας* was the guiding principle.[14] *Ὅμοιόν τε εἶναί φασι καὶ ὁμοίως ἀδύνατον τὸ ἀναιτίως τῷ γίνεσθαί τι ἐκ μὴ ὄντος.*[15] Everything that happens is linked together by the law of cause and effect. Nothing can get outside this web of connection: *ἀλλὰ παντί τε τῷ γενομένῳ ἕτερόν τι ἐπακολουθεῖν, ἠρτημένον ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἐπ' ἀνάγκης ὡς αἰτίου, καὶ πᾶν τὸ γενόμενον ἔχειν τι πρὸ αὐτοῦ, ᾧ ὡς αἰτίῳ συνήρτηται. μηδὲν γὰρ ἀναιτίως μήτε εἶναι μήτε γίνεσθαι τῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, διὰ τὸ μηδὲν εἶναι ἐν αὐτῷ ἀπολελυμένον τε καὶ κεχωρισμένον τῶν προγεγονότων ἁπάντων. διασπᾶσθαι γὰρ καὶ διαιρεῖσθαι καὶ μηκέτι τὸν κόσμον ἕνα μένειν ἀεί, κατὰ μίαν τάξιν τε καὶ οἰκονομίαν διοικούμενον, εἰ ἀναίτιός τις εἰσάγοιτο κίνησις.*[16]

Stoicism as revived by Spinoza and modern Determinism have not added a new thought or a new argument to the Stoicism of antiquity. It is still the same false hypostatisation of the conception of causality, which from being a mental category is raised to the position of the world-commanding Deity—*Ἀνάγκη*.

In truth, revived Stoicism is a great power in modern life. For it, as for ancient Stoicism, God and the uniformity of existence are identified. Many shades of meaning are possible here, according as the uniformity of existence leads to faith in an impersonal necessity, or as there is felt a desire to discern, even behind a rigid and inexorable destiny, something of the features of a heavenly Father. But the more the conception of causality is regarded as a complete expression of the essence of reality, the more must faith in God's providence appear but an imperfect expression of a truth which can be better expressed by saying that everything which happens is the inevitable consequence of inexorable causal laws.

A solution of the antinomy between religious faith and the scientific conceptions of 'natural law and causality' can only be reached by a clear perception of these two things—first, all conceptions derived from the empirical sphere lose their significance when applied to the cosmos as a whole. And secondly, scientific conceptions are only capable of grasping a particular aspect of things. They leave room for other categories.

The idea of necessity is valid for a given physical or chemical process. But it does not hold for the spiritual life of man. And to speak of a universal necessity governing all things is absurd.

Exactly so is it with the further idea of cause. Particular causal connections have to be empirically investigated; but so soon as I say that the cause of an event consists in the sum of all the conditions bearing on it, and that these conditions necessarily produce the effect, I have put a deterministic philosophy into the idea of causation. For the sum of all conditions stretches out in space and time *ad infinitum*. In time we reach back to the first world-elements; in space, out to a boundless universe. But it is incompetent for any scientific conception to make a predication of the universe as a whole. It is an illicit extension of meaning when that which is valid only of the particular is affirmed of the entire cosmos. The principle of the conservation of energy, for example, rightly asserts that in all transformations of energy the amount of energy present remains the same. But it is illegitimately extended when the inference is drawn that the sum of

energy once present *in the universe* remains constant, and that no new energy can arise. In the same way the principle is a sound one that matter persists under all chemical change; but it is wrong to conclude from this that in the universe as a whole no new matter can originate.[17] We are landed in an antinomy if from the proved fact that life does not spring from the inorganic we infer that therefore organisms can never have been spontaneously generated anywhere. Hence the idea of causality, as applied to a single event, becomes self-contradictory if the universe is taken along with the idea as its tacit concomitant. On the universe as a whole it is religion, always, that speaks the last word.

The idea of causality leads back, ultimately, to the idea of becoming. Now a false idea of cause, starting with the principle that *causa aequat effectum*, yields, if applied on the universal scale, the conclusion that everything in the cosmos has all along remained self-identical. All that happens is that, just as in a kaleidoscope, new combinations form out of the existing cosmic elements. All becoming is but the rearrangement of the unchanging.

But the only idea of causality possible starts with the fact that there *is* something new, and tries to explain it. Only it cannot wholly unveil the mystery of the new. And thus the fundamental factors of existence imply the insoluble enigma of how there comes to be becoming at all.

For the fact that, in the psychological field, becoming does yield what is new, Wundt has coined a well known and often quoted phrase, when he says that in the life of mind there is at work a principle of 'creative synthesis' or of 'creative resultants.'[18] He thereby denotes the salient feature of all psychical life, 'that the product springing from any given number of elements is more than a product homogeneous with these elements, and differing from them in character only in some qualitative or quantitative way; rather it is a *new* formation, in its most essential attributes absolutely incomparable with the factors which co-operated to form it.' That is, the effect is 'a specifically new thing, a product prepared for, but not pre-formed, in the elements.' The most prominent determinist in theology, Oscar Pfister, objects to Wundt's phrase 'creative

synthesis,' as implying a refutation of determinism. He asks: 'From the properties of oxygen and nitrogen, considered merely in themselves, is it possible to calculate beforehand the result of their chemical combination?' [19] No; yet the synthesis of chemical elements under certain conditions is just as creative as that of psychical elements. Even granting this, however, I should not infer, as Pfister does, that the psychical is homogeneous with the chemical, or that the chemical is reducible to the mechanical. An enthusiastic anticipation shared by him with many others is thus expressed by Pfister:—'Modern science cherishes the hope that we shall succeed some day in resolving chemical forces into mechanical energy, so that even chemical combinations will be capable of description in advance.' To me, on the contrary, modern developments seem to show that the dream of mechanics as the universal science is past and gone. Biology, in spite of the numerous advocates of mechanism, is gradually shaking it off. If chemical syntheses, too, are 'creative,' if they represent new combinations containing more than the elements of which they are composed, this means

that it is impossible to reduce even chemical processes to what is simply mechanical. In that case, inorganic nature itself exhibits 'new beginnings.' And that, again, implies that all the facts here are not covered by a conception of causality which represents the effect as contained wholly in its causes.

Deterministic ideas of causality are also employed by many psychologists. For example, Höffding writes: 'Psychology, like every other science, must be deterministic; *i.e.* it must start with the assumption that the law of causality holds even of the volitional life, just as we assume that it holds for consciousness in general and for physical nature.' [20] This sentence has no meaning except on Höffding's own interpretation of the causal law. 'We affirm a causal relation,' he says, 'when we discover that two phenomena are connected with each other in such a way that, the one being given, the other *inevitably* follows.' [21]

In the same way Ebbinghaus maintains that 'the conception of a strict uniformity in all soul-life, and hence of the completely determined character of our actions, is really the basal presupposition of all serious psychological inquiry.' [22]

What are we to think of this 'inevitability'? We merely say that, given the condition, the result follows. For example, should a man lose his footing on a precipice, he must inevitably fall. But to say that the event indicated by the clause 'given the condition' is equally necessary with the result is to interpret the causal law wrongly. Out of a necessity which is never more than hypothetical, it makes a categorical necessity pervasive of the entire universe. Everywhere it changes the possible into the necessary, hope and faith into resignation and passivity.[23]

Tracing back each separate causal series, we find an infinite number of new causal series, all of which are invested with necessity, given a certain new condition. Thus, the man was bound to lose his footing if he was over-fatigued. He was bound to be over-fatigued, if he had been climbing in the mountains for days on end without sufficient food. And again, if the desire for mountain-climbing in him had become a passion, he was bound to gratify it. But that this 'if' is necessary in its turn would follow only if these causal series anywhere brought us up against some ultimate

factor of the cosmos, as to which we could say: Here we find what is absolutely necessary. In fact, however, we never reach this ultimate point. What we have everywhere is unconcluded series which converge 'accidentally.' A conclusion comes only from religious thought; which, if it is deterministic, holds that nothing exists but an impersonal cosmic law, and, if it is theistic, that there is a real providence. But we cannot affirm that either of the two positions is empirically demonstrable. The theistic position, however, is in harmony with the religious life; the deterministic substitutes imperfect religion for a completely religious experience.

Here, then, is a curious circle. Determinism, it is held, is already given in the validity of the causal principle. But when we look closer, the causal bond implies only that, given the condition, the result is inevitable. It is only determinism which goes on to affirm the inevitability also of the condition, so transferring an empirical category to the universe as a whole.

If however we reject this interpretation of the causal principle, we dispose also of the

theory that everything which happens in the world is 'unequivocally determined,' or that every process is the necessary and inevitable outcome of the existing phase of the cosmos. We discard the idea that the initial condition of the world so included the later development as that this development must necessarily result. And this makes room for miracle in the sense that there exists a possibility of new beginnings, a creative action of God in the world. His world-rule, in its detailed execution, is free from the limiting condition that each event must be the necessary product of the antecedent state of things. In a word, the conception of Divine providence which, on the mechanical interpretation of causality, must throw back God's freedom entirely to the origin of things, and retain merely unalterable necessity for all that follows, is delivered from these fetters once for all. We can now think of God's rule as free, not as being arbitrary or disorderly, but in the sense that its administration does not answer to mechanical ideas of causality, but includes new 'positions.' And if what dominates the cosmos is not immutable necessity, not sheer constancy of being, but a tendency rather to

variation, reaching its loftiest expression in the human spirit, then God's government of the world simply cannot be interpreted as a logical scheme, but implies on His part marvellous and miraculous power.

Even in the realm of nature there is a real becoming, analogous to what is creatively new in the domain of spirit; certainly this holds of the department of organic life. Here becoming is a process from which there results that which is new in contrast to the past. The factors of becoming at no time explain process without remainder. This is already clear from controversies circling round the idea of evolution; to analyse a developing organic process completely and without remainder is an impracticable task.

This means, for the conception of miracle, that even in the connection of cause and effect there resides so much that is inscrutable that room is left for the religious idea of the miraculous. The wider the causal connections we survey, too, the more enigmas multiply. History in all its forms, therefore, has to reckon with the inexplicable mysteries of the individual life. The philosophy of history is satisfied, as Ranke

says, when it has pointed to the inscrutable element in the causal series out of which the new fact emerges. 'From the standpoint of the Divine Idea,' he writes, 'I am obliged to think that humanity is charged with an infinite multiplicity of developments, which emerge into visibility little by little, according to laws which are unknown to us; laws, however, which are mysterious, and greater than we suppose.' [24] I even question very much whether we are justified in at all carrying over to the Divine government of the world the conception of law which is valid for finite experience.

It may be objected, however: Theology is a poor business if it consists in a hunt for 'gaps,' rejoicing to find a hiatus in scientific thought where it can modestly smuggle in its own suggestions. Troeltsch, in another context, inveighs against a theology which lays emphasis on the underivable element in Jesus' person, and finds in it the basis of our certainty of Divine revelation. 'What is one to say to such arguments?' he asks. 'Shall we admire the modesty of a theology which actually finds its basis in a discontinuity, or shall we not rather point to the uncertainty that must cling to the

assertion that there *is* such a discontinuity, simply because it is beyond our power even to distinguish with certainty between gaps in the causal nexus of ordinary human life and the gap—with which alone we are now concerned—within the personality of Jesus ? ' [25]

I hold, on the contrary, that theology will never base itself on ' gaps,' and never has done so. But certainly it becomes a pressing duty for the theologian to point out gaps, whenever conceptions of causality come to be employed which would make a living relation of God to the world impossible. We are bound to signalise the hiatus between Jesus and pre-Christian religious history whenever it is proposed to derive His person wholly from the conditions of Jewish and Roman history. We are bound to emphasise discontinuities in the causal interpretation of soul-life whenever determinism claims to exhibit each act as the inevitable sum of inner and outer influences. Nay, even as regards the single physical event, we must emphasise the fact that causal explanations can never interpret process in any exhaustive way. If the religious view of the world is real, and not merely an imagination, then the possibility of

it must be capable of proof. It is in this sense only that the 'hunt for gaps' is of significance, but in this sense it is essential. The usual defence of miracle takes certain conspicuous miracles—*e.g.* the cures wrought by Jesus—and attempts to show that they are inexplicable; and in spite of all analogies it must be confessed that there is a residuum of mystery. But it is equally necessary to bring out the mystery which resides even in the simplest processes of being, in the very texture of events. Were it not so, to interpret them religiously would be impossible.

On this point, then, we concede that historical inquiry is not called upon to point out gaps in the causal interpretation of things, just as it is no part of the business of science to bring out the fact that the things whose connecting links have to be scientifically investigated have other aspects also, which come before a different tribunal. It appears then as if these different estimates were mutually exclusive. But real contradiction exists only when science and historical thought claim to give an exhaustive interpretation of the universe, or when they assert that

they can account for even the minutest cosmic elements.

If now, a case of causal connection being given, it is impossible to hold that the effect is deducible, without remainder, from the cause, it follows that no deterministic sense can be attached to the phrase 'the inviolable causal nexus.' And this being so, it cannot negative the influx of new factors from the transcendent. Miracle is in no sense a breach of causation. I may have satisfied myself as to the connection existing between cause and effect, and yet be persuaded that the effect reveals an element not explicable by the condition of the cosmos as a whole.

History, accordingly, is no more than science called upon to register miracles, but just as little is it called on to deny them. From the historical point of view we are equally justified in saying that the religion of the Jews was the condition of Jesus' advent, and in asserting, with Ranke, that 'the essential thing in Christianity was not prepared for by any previous imperfect stages; on the contrary, Christianity is an abrupt Divine fact; as indeed all great productions of genius bear

upon them the marks of immediate inspiration.'[26] Both attitudes are equally right: on the one hand, I search in a given event for the operation of causal factors present in the world, but on the other I see in it an incomprehensibly new revelation—as, for example, in the death of Jesus on the cross. We must break the fetters of determinism; for the rest, the actually existing links of connection still remain.

But perhaps a concession may be offered. Yes, it may be said, in the realm of spirit miracles do happen; but nature is a rigidly closed system, with no room for miracle anywhere. Nature is the sphere of necessity, spirit the realm of freedom. Admitting spiritual miracles, therefore, we can acknowledge them in nature only so far as it is worked upon by spirit. But the direct action of God in nature is impossible. A strict application of the conception 'natural law' makes impossible all miracle in the natural sphere. This necessitates a more exact inquiry into the idea of 'natural law.' In especial, when we speak of 'a world-order governed by natural law,' it must be ascertained how much is a subjective addition to the data, and how much is purely

an expression of the facts before us. It is clear that it is by our minds that natural laws are discovered, formulated, and corrected. Nothing could be more anthropomorphic than to conceive the laws of nature as entities ruling the world. Sometimes, of course, we tend involuntarily to turn our ideas into metaphysical entities; and it is certainly a poetical and anthropomorphic interpretation of nature when, in the *Götter Griechenlands*, Schiller writes that

> 'Gleich dem toten Schlag der Pendeluhr
> Dient sie knechtisch dem Gesetz der Schwere,
> Die entgötterte Natur.'

The servility or bondage of the heavenly bodies to the law of gravity is just as much interpolated into nature as the fancy of Helios driving his golden car. The necessity, or 'must,' resident in the laws of nature, we wrongly regard as a compulsion laid on things. It appears to us as if things must obey the higher compulsion whether they will or not. In reality the compulsion is in our own minds. Once we have formed accurate ideas of law, we 'must' conceive of them as valid without exception. But the necessity is in the logical constraint to which we are subject. From the proposition

that all bodies are heavy, it follows that every body heavier than air must fall. This is a necessity we deduce from our idea. But in nature all we have is the fact that things actually are so; in addition, there is uniformity of process. 'Phenomena exhibit not a trace of the constraint characteristic of the reasonings which preside over observation. They are simply what they are, and of "necessity" they know nothing.' [27] 'Things as such are given to us as oscillating between the two extremes — intransitive, as it were, neither active nor passive, neither animate nor inanimate, neither free nor necessitated.' [28]

This does not mean that 'laws of nature' are to be interpreted as purely subjective or even arbitrary constructions, with which we traverse the world with a view to its conquest. Any such subjectivistic conception of law, it appears to me, is a mere exaggeration of the aspect I am emphasising. The fact rather is that in spite of all these subjectivisitic phrases, such as 'law' and 'necessity,' it is nature itself that guides us to conceptions of law. In the inorganic realm there is a predominance of the homogeneous, and nature itself impels us to

collect these uniform phenomena under general ideas. Hence our conceptions of law deliberately abstract from individual peculiarities; they embrace only what is common. The higher we rise in the organic realm, the greater is the differentiation. And for that reason it is impossible to describe the life of any particular man merely by scientific conceptions of law. Of course, all discovered laws hold good even of his action; his thought is subject to the laws of ideal construction and of logic. But I find it impossible to suppose that I could ever be in a position to represent a human personality in terms of mere law, even if all the laws of nature and of mental life were already discovered. For all such laws indicate only what is common to all men, while it is just what is *peculiar to this man* that I want to know. Clearly, then, what laws of nature do is to focus actual events from particular points of view. They are surveys of individually differentiated things, undertaken with the intention of collecting homogeneous processes under definite formulas. But they are very far from being capable of exhausting the riches of fact. Still less are they the metaphysical

kernel of nature. The view is still widely current which takes natural law as able to unseal to us the hidden depths of existence. But just as the purely subjectivistic interpretation of law is wrong, so the exactly opposite error is chargeable upon the theory which transfers natural law to the very being of things. To regard it as the expression of the ultimate essence of the world and its internal structure is to overestimate its importance.

It follows that I cannot fully express the essence of nature in a system of conceptions drawn from the sphere of law. Still less is it possible to find a higher law or universal necessity which determines the confluence of laws affecting me personally at a given moment. There is no such thing as a supreme law of laws, nor do the particular laws known to us present even the suggestion of a system of natural law; and hence at each moment the universe represents a unique complication of circumstances, for which there is no other scientific description than 'chance.' The final alternative confronting us is not natural law or Divine caprice, but universal chance or Divine providence.

But if natural laws are in no sense intermediary between God and His government of the world, have they then no value for religious thought? May the believer, *quâ* believer, ignore their reality altogether? By no means. But what he has to take account of is not the scientific idea of law, but the religious idea of the cosmic 'order.' He must recognise that nature is a sphere of fixed ordinances; and it is not only as regards our work that we must affirm the truth that the natural ordinances are the material given us to work upon. The same conception holds also for our religious life. In our faith in providence also we recognise that God gives us nothing which is contrary to the fixed order of nature. He brings none of the dead back to this life. Not indeed as if nature were a restraining limit for Him, but because the natural order is an expression of His will. We must not look to God for magic.

In the same way, even the religious man must take account of the fact that there are fixed causal connections, though certainly nothing in the shape of a causal nexus unequivocally determined. The victim of evil temper may not anticipate that by to-morrow he will have

conquered his temper altogether. Though God does miracles, we see as a matter of fact that His world-order is wholesome, and that in the hard, persistent warfare against evil it brings men gradually to triumph. Nevertheless, the fixed ordinances in nature and the existing links of causation in each particular instance leave open a multitude of possibilities; hence not only is it subjectively impracticable for us to know what future possibilities may flow from the present phase of the universe, but even objectively there are a number of different potentialities. Of these one may be more probable than the other. Yet the coming event is never fixed unalterably by empirical causal connections or uniformities. But in that case, faith in providence, prayer, and free moral action are all possible; on the opposite theory, they must be given up. In the case of sickness, for example, different possibilities are always open. Hence I may not affirm with certainty that the natural order is unquestionably operating here for death or for recovery. And as we anticipate the future with hope, fear, and doubt; as the future is the product neither of an all-determining causal law nor of an

impersonal law of nature, but of God's will, we may and we must pray and believe and hope. True, as the sickness runs its course I may grow more and more assured that death is to be the end; and then, certainly, it will be my duty to bow to God's will with reverent submission. But even in that case what I see is not the self-fulfilment of a law of nature, dominating all impersonally, but the accomplishment of the Divine will. Even here, therefore, I maintain the principle that we ought not to introduce natural laws as intermediary between God and His administration of the world. The 'natural order' is a quite different type of idea from that of 'natural law.' The particular, the individual, is not brought about by the fact that there are natural ordinances, but by an intricate complication of influences, in which inherited characteristics and accidental experiences play no small part. Hence we must assert both things—the ordinances of nature are God's will, but which ordinances shall enter, and in what succession and texture, is determined by the personal free will of God, not by universal necessity. It is only in a derivative sense that we can anywhere speak of the 'laws'

of the Divine government. For instance: 'Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people' (Prov. xiv. 34). Or, again, it may be taken as a law that 'Honesty is the best policy.' The proverbial wisdom of every nation has fixed on a number of general principles drawn from experience, which may also be named 'laws.' But it is quite mistaken to conclude from the use of the same term that the meaning of 'law' or even 'natural law' is in each case the same.

The revolutions of recent years may confirm the 'law' that autocracies and aristocratic despotisms lead 'necessarily' to popular risings; but no one would mythologise so far as to regard this 'law' as a potent metaphysical force which controls the essence of things. A 'law' is a rule abstracted by actual observation of a number of analogous cases; but it is not the law that makes history. On the contrary, in a law or rule we collect what is common to an infinite multiplicity of facts, specially in order to learn necessary cautions for the future.

We may competently try to formulate certain laws of the Divine government. As, for

example: Before interposing, God often permits evil to work itself out. He makes a man's ethical force to develop under fierce outward opposition. His compassion allows men space to repent. He converts no man against his will. In this way quite a number of such 'laws' might be stated, all of them derived from experience of God's actual methods and from the interpretation of such experience. But we never can infer from them in any particular instance how God's world-government will actually proceed; whether, *e.g.*, He will lay yet heavier blows of fortune on one man with a view to spur him on to new moral energy, or shape the future more happily for another whose trials have been peculiarly painful. It is just in cases of this sort that we see most clearly how incapable such 'laws' are of really explaining the Divine action. They have no resemblance to the exact laws of nature; for in many instances we are bound to add qualifying phrases like 'often,' 'sometimes,' 'usually.' Still less do such 'laws' enable us to calculate beforehand God's methods in the future. However many of them we may combine, they really do not in the least help us to explain the nature and

life of God. His rule, were it exhausted in merely rational conceptions of law, would be utterly deprived of its character as essentially amazing, inscrutable, and superior to all human thought.

A clear alternative, then, confronts us at this point: either God's rule is genuinely personal, directed to the salvation of persons and flowing from the eternal love of a personal Being; and in that case it cannot be a system of self-fulfilling laws. Or it may be completely described in categories drawn from the sphere of law; and in that case, again, God is really impersonal, a logical Idea, the needle-eye through which pass all the threads of cosmic relation. But this last means an idea incommensurate with personal Divine government. Man may regard providence as personal, but it is only in consequence of a transference to Him, perhaps necessary yet actually erroneous, of personalistic categories.

Religious interpretation of the world is always evoked by individual experience. It is just in the situation where a man finds himself—a situation which never can recur—that he feels God's presence with him in mercy or in judg-

ment. This aspect of things is changed only if I turn my attention no longer to the dispensations of the individual life, but rather to the problem why there should be Divine ordinances in the cosmos at all, and what their significance is.[29] A believer must regard them as for him the wholesome and valuable material of moral action, recognising equally their salutary and their oppressive and even crushing aspect. Siebeck rightly holds that, in spite of all, suffering humanity in the main has nevertheless not permitted itself to be crushed, but has acquired ever new moral power for the conflict with pain and sin. Consequently the religious man must believe that these cosmic ordinances are ultimately, and *sub specie aeternitatis*, salutary. In this I agree unreservedly with Siebeck; the natural order is necessary in view of the world-process as a whole. At the same time it ought not to be made fundamental to the religious view of the world; for in no sense does it touch the question as to particular providence. That is neither asserted nor denied; nor, indeed, did Siebeck's argument call for any declaration on the subject. Wrong conclusions are reached

only when his positions are regarded as religion's final word. Ultimately the religious interpretation of things begins with an understanding of the personal fortunes of the individual, not with reflections upon the cosmos as a whole.

Lipsius is convinced that the idea 'order of nature' does not completely express the Divine rule. Hence alongside of the 'order of nature' he puts two other 'orders'—the moral order and the redemptive order, in this respect following Schweizer.[30] It is certainly true that we may try to arrange what happens under these rubrics. But ultimately every single event which concerns us is a confluence of all these three orders. And this proves how ill fitted these categories are to serve as fundamental for the interpretation of the particular instance. What we have to do with is not now the natural order, now the moral order, now the redemptive order; we have invariably to do with God's personal government. No conception of 'order' whatsoever is equal to expressing the distinctive character of His rule.

The arguments of this last chapter presuppose those previously given as to the religious

necessity of having a metaphysical conception of miracle. Hence they will only impress a reader who regards the religious and the metaphysical conception of miracle as alike justified, and who also feels himself constantly obliged to use the ideas of causality and law in scientific inquiry. My object in this chapter has merely been to demonstrate the possibility of a perpetually renewed action of the transcendent within the world. And at every point my argument has presupposed the reality of miracle.

Now, if the spiritual force in the universe is actually increasing, if history represents an exhaustless augmentation of 'new' elements, then the interpretation offered by religion, tracing this new element to the action of the transcendent, is certainly not provable scientifically. But it cannot be maintained that it is in any way impossible or even improbable. On the contrary, the insoluble enigmas presented by the genesis of what is novel, original, and creative in the epochs of cosmic history suggest that we must assume, not a creation that happened once, but a creation which is always proceeding; in other words, a perpetual production by God of what is really new.

There are no miracles, certainly, in the sense of new events which arise without connection with their antecedents. Thus even the origin of the human race must be conceived as having been connected with the non-human creation; for every miracle is a continuation of God's creative work. But no one can recognise the reality of miracles who has not been conscious of miracle in his own experience. The conception is one which the religious interpretation of things must decline to surrender. Religion is bound first and foremost to construe its own facts by its own ideas; then, and then only, may it attempt to discover lines of connection with other forms of thought. Science and history are bound to ignore miracle; religious thought must always give it a central place.

NOTES

CHAPTER I

[1] *First Principles*, c. ii.

[2] *Dogmatik* [2], § 731.

[3] *Dogmatik* [3], § 436 ; [1] § 419.

[4] *Die biblische Wunderbegriff* (German translation by A. Baur), 1895, pp. 34, 44, 48, 54.

[5] *Die Wunder im Neuen Testament*, 1905, p. 10 f.

[6] *Grundriss der christlichen Glaubens- und Sittenlehre*, [4] § 89.

[7] 'Religionsphilosophie,' in *Die Philosophie im Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts*, i. p. 32.

[8] So, for example, Schanz in the article 'Wunder' in Wetzer and Welte's *Kirchenlexikon*, xii.[2], p. 1811 ff.

[9] Cf. H. Maier's admirable statement as to religious thought in his book, *Psychologie des emotionalen Denkens*, 1908, p. 499 ff. The gist of this book is given briefly in the later work, *An der Grenze der Philosophie*, 1909, in an essay on D. Fr. Strauss, p. 303 ff. There, p. 312 ff., in a discussion of miracle, we are told that belief in miracle always springs from 'affective' interpretation of fact. Nor, according to Maier, is this interpretation illusory. 'Cognitive' thought seeks, and must seek, to justify the emotional and imaginative ideas of faith. But there is here no antinomy. Faith is charged with objectively valid truth. But cognitive thought is unable to work this truth into the form of rational conceptions; and where the attempt is made to do this, what happens is that a meagre metaphysic takes the place of faith, coloured by

emotion and operating with anthropomorphic ideas. So also with Strauss.

[10] The ' inscrutable ' is an inalienable element of the miraculous. Rade (*Das religiöse Wunder*, 1909) makes it the basis of his argument. On the other hand, G. Traub (*Die Wunder im Neuen Testament*, p. 3 ff.) argues against the position that miracle includes this inexplicable factor, with the object of proving that even explicable events may be miraculous. But, in fact, every event has an aspect in which it is intrinsically inexplicable; thus, *e.g.*, in the familiar instance cited by Traub of a tile falling on me from the roof of a house, each detail is explicable, but the convergence of the different causal series is in principle inexplicable. Religious belief in miracle, therefore, must always accentuate both things—the action of God, and the element of the mysterious and inscrutable.

[11] Cf. H. Maier, *An der Grenze der Philosophie*, p. 306 f.

[11a] Even Troeltsch speaks of the necessity we are under ' to recognise, in the history of religion, continual new creations which take shape within the causal nexus ' (*Theol. Rundschau*, 1903, p. 109). Cf. his article on the essence of religion in *Kultur der Gegenwart*, i. 4, 2, p. 32; and *Das Historische in Kants Religionsphilosophie*, 1904, p. vi.

[12] I use both these expressions on purpose, for God is both immanent in the world and transcendent. The first expression relates to His immanence, the second to His transcendence.

[13] *Wesen des Christentums*, pp. 17-19; *Theol. Literatur-Zeitung*, 1905, No. 15. Cf. also L. Kessler, *Christliche Welt*, 1905, p. 915 ff.

[14] *Psychologie und Erkenntnistheorie in der Religionswissenschaft*, 1905, pp. 42, 43.

[15] *Summa Theol.*, ii. 8, 30.

[16] *Ibid.*, i. 105, 110.

[17] Hence we do not find this distinction in writers like Ritschl, Herrmann, Kaftan, Rade, Kähler, Stange, etc.

[18] Cf. also H. Cornelius, *Psychologie als Erfahrungswissenschaft*, 1897, p. 356 ff.

[19] Cf. chapters viii. and ix.

CHAPTER II

[1] Cf., amongst other works, W. Bender, *Der Wunderbegriff des Neuen Testaments*, 1871; E. Ménégoz, *Der biblische Wunderbegriff* (German edition), 1895; Beth, *Die Wunder Jesu*, 1905; also the Lives of Jesus and the text-books of Old and New Testament Theology.

[2] *Das Frömmigkeitsideal der modernen Theologie*, 1907, p. 8.

[3] *Die Wunder Jesu*, 1905, p. 31.

[4] Cf. Wundt, *Völkerpsychologie*, ii. 2, 1906, p. 55 ff.

[5] H. Usener, in *Zeitschrift für neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1903, pp. 1 ff.

[6] Cf. Paul Wendland, *Die hellenistisch-römische Kultur*, 1907, p. 122 ff.

[7] Suetonius, *Vespasian*, 7; Tacitus, *Hist.*, iv. 81.

[8] *Esquisse d'une philosophie de la religion*, 1897, p. 70.

[9] *Der biblische Wunderbegriff* (German edition), p. 11.

[10] P. 6.

[11] P. 8.

[12] *Das Frömmigkeitsideal der modernen Theol.*, p. 9.

[13] Article 'Wunder' in Herzog's *Realencyclopädie*, 21^3, p. 558.

[14] *Das Frömmigkeitsideal*, p. 9.

[15] *Alttest. Theologie*[4], 1889, p. 577.

[16] *Ibid.*, 1895, p. 307.

[17] The idea of nature, it is true, does not as yet occur in the Old Testament.

[18] Cf. chapter ix.

[19] Cf. Titius, *Neutest. Lehre von der Seligkeit*, i. 1895, p. 48 ff.

[20] *Hat Jesus Wunder getan?* (Leipzig, 1903), p. 48 ff.

[21] Cf. P. Wernle, 'Altchristliche Apologetik im Neuen Testament' in the *Z.N.T.W.* for 1900; also his 'Die 3 Stufen der urchristlichen Apologetik in religionsgeschichtlichen Beleuchtung' in the *Akten des 2 internationalen religionswiss. Kongresses in Basel*, 1904.

[22] *Die Wunder Jesu*, p. 19.

[23] P. 18.

[24] So, *e.g.*, in the *Vaticanum*, De fide 3.

CHAPTER III

[1] *Apologeticus*, 22-23.

[2] Κατὰ Κέλσου, i. 2, 46.

[3] iii. 24 ('from grievous mischances, and from distractions of mind, and madness, and countless other ills incurable by either men or demons'); cf. 36.

[4] iii. 24.

[5] iii. 26.

[6] iii. 26.

[7] *De civ. Dei*, 21, 8: 'Omnia quippe portenta contra naturam dicimus esse: sed non sunt. Quomodo est enim contra naturam, quod Dei fit voluntate, cum voluntas tanti utique conditoris conditae rei cujusque natura sit? Portentum ergo fit, non contra naturam, sed contra quam est nota natura.' So again, *de utilitate credendi*, 16; *contra Faustum Manichaeum*, 26, 3; 29, 2: 'quae quidem contra naturam plerumque appellantur, non quod naturae adversentur, sed quod naturae modum, qui nobis est usitatus, excedant.'

[8] *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*, 26, 3.

[9] *Sermo*, 247; cf. *de civ. Dei*, 21, 5.

[10] *De civ. Dei*, 21, 6; 10, 18.

[11] *Sermo*, 247.

[12] *De genesi ad lit.*, vi. 13.

[13] Cf. also Albertus Magnus, *Summa Theol.*, ii. 8, 30, 2.

[14] His writings have found a place among the works of the more illustrious Church Fathers. Cf. Migne's Patrologie, *Augustinus*, vol. iii. p. 2149 ff.

[15] *Summa Theol.*, ii. 8, 30.

[16] *Calvins Lebenswerk in seinen Briefen*, by R. Schwarz, i. p. 49.

[17] *De genesi ad literam*, vi. 14: 'Causales illae rationes, quas mundo indidit'; cf. vi. 15-17.

[18] vi. 18: 'Si non omnes causas in creatura primitus condita praefixit, sed aliquas in sua voluntate servavit, non sunt quidem illae, quas in sua voluntate servavit, ex istarum quas creavit necessitate pendentes: non tamen possunt esse contrariae, quas in sua voluntate servavit illis, quas sua voluntate instituit; quia Dei voluntas non potest sibi esse contraria.' Cf. *de trin.* iii. 8.

[19] *De genesi ad literam*, ix. 18: 'Habet Deus in se ipso absconditas quorundam factorum causas, quas rebus conditis non inseruit easque implet non illo opere providentiae, quo naturas substituit ut sint, sed illo quo eas administrat ut voluerit, quas, ut voluit, condidit.'

[20] *Ibid.*, vi. 16-17.

[21] *Summa Theol.*, ii. 8, 30-31.

[22] *Ibid.*, 105, 5-8; 110, 4; *Summa contra gentiles*, iii. 99-101.

[23] *Introd. in theol.* (Jena, 1678), p. 391 ff.

[24] *Syntagma seu corp. doctr.* (Basel, 1566).

[25] *Theol. Scholastica* (Hanau, 1618), p. 318.

[26] *Loci Theologici*, iv. 85.

[27] *Inst. theol. dogm.*, ii. 1, 28.

[28] In the *Kirchenpostille* (Erlangen edition), 12, p. 218 ff.; cf. p. 182 ff.; Weimar edition, vol. x., 3, pp. 144-147.

[29] Erlangen edition, 16, 190.

[30] *Werke* (Braunschweig edition), iv. 404.

[31] Erlangen edition, 12, 218 ff.

[32] 12, 182 ff.

[33] 63, 302 ff.

[34] 16, 190.

[35] *Wider den neuen Abgott zu Meissen* (Braunschweig edition), 4, 71.

[36] Erlangen edition, 12, 184.

[37] *Calvins Lebenswerk in seinen Briefen*, by R. Schwarz, 1909, i. p. 49 f.; cf. *Inst. relig. christ.*, i. 14, 13-19.

[38] So, for example, even Kant, in his *Allegemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels*, 1755.

[39] *Inquiry concerning the Human Understanding*, 1748.

[40] *Cautio criminalis*, or *de processibus contra sagas*, 1681.

[41] *Dissertatio de crimine magiae*, 1761.

[42] *Die bezauberte Welt*, 1690.

[43] *Dissertatio de Daimoniacis, quorum in Evangeliis fit mentio* (Halle, 1760); *Untersuchung der dämonischen Leute*, 1762; *Vorrede und Anhang zu dem Versuch einer biblischen Dämonologie*, 1776.

[44] *Theol. polit. Tractat.*, c. vi.

[45] *Ibid.*, c. iii.: 'By the government of God I understand the fixed and unalterable order of nature or the connection of natural things.' The general laws of nature, he says, are 'nothing but God's eternal decrees, which always contain eternal truth and necessity.'

[46] *Ethics*, i. 29.

[47] *Ibid.*, i., conclusion.

[48] *Ibid.*, ii., conclusion.

[49] *Ibid.*, ii., conclusion.

[50] *Ibid.*, i., conclusion.

[51] *Theol. polit. Tractat.*, c. vi.

[52] *Ibid.*, c. i.

[53] *Ibid.*, c. vi.

[54] *Théodicée, de la bonté de Dieu*, i. 54.

[55] *Théodicée, de la conformité de la foi avec la raison*, 3.

[56] *Lettres*, iv. 44.

[57] *Ibid.*, v. 117.

[58] *Ibid.*, iv. 43.

[59] *Reden über die Religion* (first edition), p. 117 f. The following editions, and the note ([16]) appended to the second 'Rede' in the third edition, make no essential change.

[60] *Der christl. Glaube*, § 47.

[61] *Ibid.*, § 46.

[62] *Ibid.*, § 47, 1; p. 256.

[63] The italics are mine.

[64] Of course, what God wills happens unalterably. But this unalterability is quite wrongly interpreted if the necessity attaching to our conceptions of law is taken as exactly representing the Divine necessity.

[65] *Der christl. Glaube*, § 79.

[66] *Ibid.*, § 13, 1.

[67] *Glaubenslehre*, i., 1879, p. 595. Cf. also Lommatzsch, *Schleiermachers Lehre vom Wunder*, 1872. A good account of Schleiermacher's views on miracle is given by H. Mulert, *Schleiermachers geschichtsphilosophischen Ansichten*, 1907, p. 47 ff.

[68] Cf. Mulert, *op. cit.*, pp. 73, 87.

[69] Cf. H. Rickert, *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung*, p. 248 ff. Ed. Meyer writes, in his *Zur Theorie und Methodik der Geschichte*, 1902, p. 26: 'In fact, during a long course of historical inquiry I have never myself discovered a law of history, nor have I ever met with one in the mind of any other. It may be taken as agreed that laws of history have, so far, no existence save as postulates.'

[70] H. Lang, *Zeitstimmen aus der reformierten Schweiz*, 1860, p. 462.

[71] *Zeitstimmen*, 1861, p. 16.

[72] *Zeitstimmen*, 1860, p. 461.

[73] *Dogmatik*, i.[2], p. 149, § 49.

[74] *Ibid.*, p. 156, § 60.

[75] *Ibid.*, ii.[2], §§ 639, 655, 656, 733.

[76] *Ibid.*, §§ 700 f., 715 f.

[77] *Ibid.*, § 734.

[78] *Ibid.*, ii.[2], § 655, p. 477.

[79] *Ibid.*, § 721.

[80] *Ibid.*, § 422.

[81] *E.g.* Troeltsch, *Götting. Gelehrte Anzeigen*, 1894, p. 847 f.

[82] §§ 411, 412.

[83] *Dogmatik*[3], § 427.

[84] § 427.

[85] *Ibid.*, § 433, p. 339 f.; cf. § 431.

[86] *Offenbarung und Wunder*, 1908, p. 31 ff. Cf. also his *Ethik*[4], 1909, § 14; and his article 'Gebet' in Herzog's *Realencycl.*, vi.[3] p. 390 ff.; also his 'Zur Lehre von der göttlichen Vorsehung' in the *Christliche Welt*, 1887, p. 482 ff.

[87] *Offenbarung und Wunder*, pp. 31, 40.

[88] P. 31.

[89] *Realencycl.*, vi. p. 390.

[90] This impairs the Divine immutability. The course of the world is always capable of being altered and taking a new direction. Nothing is changed except what God had apparently resolved on. Cf. Calvin, *Institutio*, i. 17, 12-14.

[91] *Christliche Welt*, 1887, p. 484.

[92] *Offenbarung und Wunder*, p. 42.

[93] *Ethik*, § 14[1], p. 57 f.

[94] *Christliche Welt*, 1887, p. 484. Cf. also the criticism of Herrmann in P. Mezger's *Rätsel des christlichen Vorsehungsglaubens*, 1904, pp. 24-33.

[95] *Offenbarung und Wunder*, pp. 27-71.

[96] P. 33.

[97] *Das religiöse Wunder*, 1909, p. 17 ff.

[98] Cf. also P. Volkmann, *Erkenntnistheoretische Grundzüge der Naturwissenschaften* [2], 1910, p. 171.

[99] P. 34.

[100] *Theol. Lit.-Zeit.*, 1909.

[101] P. 36 f.

[102] *Kant contra Haeckel*, 1901, pp. 71-72, 89-92.

CHAPTER IV

[1] Cf., besides the books cited below, Th. Simon, *Entwicklung und Offenbarung*, 1907; Beth, *Der Entwicklungsgedanke und das Christentum*, 1909, p. 196 ff.

[2] I might also have used the phrase, 'action by God within the human world.' Yet the word 'intrusion' ought to stand; for what is in view is Divine action perpetually renewed, not a single communication of force, exhausting God's nature and action.

[3] Paul Wendland, *Die hellenistisch-römische Kultur*, p. 121, writes: 'Even the message of Jesus is certainly conditioned in a variety of ways—by presuppositions and ideas, by the Jewish conception of the world, by antagonism to Pharisaism; though the originality of the new revelation and the power of a life springing up out of uniquely personal experience breaks out through the husk and vesture of contemporary history, filling the old forms with new content.'

[4] Gruppe writes in his *Griech. Mythologie und Religionsgesch.*, ii. p. 1606: 'We shall never be in a position to exhibit Christianity as altogether the inevitable product of the conditions under which it arose, for—in a higher degree even than is the case everywhere with the creations of genius—a great part of its power is rooted in the abysmal depths of personality in its Founder.'

[5] Cf. what I have written above on Schleiermacher, p. 90.

[6] Cf. *supra*, pp. 73-78.

[7] *System der christlichen Lehre*, p. 391 ; cf. also p. 271 f.

[8] P. 159.

[9] P. 190 ff.

[10] Pp. 102 ff., 204 ff.

[11] Wendt, p. 204 f.

[12] Since Moses calls Jahve the God of 'the fathers,' it seems to me probable that the Jahve-religion reaches back to a pre-Mosaic stage.

[13] *Entwicklung des Christentums*, 1907, p. 4.

[14] This biological conception of development is taken as the only possible one even by Stange, who writes (*Grundriss der Religionsphilosophie*, § 18): 'The presupposition on which the evolutionary view of religion rests is rather the belief that the various possible religions can be deduced from the general notion of religion.'

[15] Cf., *e.g.*, Seeberg, *Die Kirche Deutschlands in* 19. *Jahrhundert*, 1903, p. 315; *Zur systematischen Theologie*, 1909, p. 135.

[16] *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 1895, pp. 204-229.

[17] P. 215 f.

[18] P. 226.

[19] *Z.T.K.*, 1894, pp. 198-228; 1896, pp. 167-196; *Absolutheit*, pp. 62-72.

[20] *Kultur der Gegenwart*, i. 4, 2^2, p. 31.

[21] *Z.T.K.*, 1893, p. 183: we must 'renounce, most of all in the most difficult problems, the hope of arriving at the law of evolution and a resulting criterion.'

[22] *Absolutheit*, p. 65.

[23] The contrary of law, however, is not caprice.

[24] Cf. Rümelin, 'Über Gesetze in der Geschichte,' in his *Reden und Aufsätze*, *N.F.*, 1881, p. 188 ff. He shows that it is impossible to speak of laws of history in the strict sense.

[25] *Über historische und dogmatische Methode*, 1900, p. 18.

[26] *Absolutheit*, p. 65; cf. *Z.T.K.*, 1896, p. 176 ff.

CHAPTER V

[1] *Summa Theologiae*, i. 105, 7.

[2] Cf. Schanz' article on miracle in Wetzer and Welte's *Kirchenlexikon*[2], 12, 1899, p. 1811 ff.

[3] Cf. *supra*, p. 66 f.

[4] *Introductio in theologiam* (Jena, 1678), p. 391 ff.

[5] *System der christlichen Gewissheit*[2], §§ 43, 47.

[6] Article 'Wunder' in Herzog's *Realencyclopädie*[3], 21, p. 558 ff.

[7] *Dogmatik*[2], § 731.

[8] *Gewissheit*, ii.[2], § 47, 3, p. 231.

[9] *Dogmatik*[3], §§ 420, 436.

[10] *Psychologie und Erkenntnistheorie in der Religionswissenschaft*, 1905, p. 41.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

[12] *Absolutheit*, p. 11.

[13] So Wendt, *System der christlichen Lehre*, p. 154.

[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 172-174.

CHAPTER VI

[1] Cf. on what follows:—G. Kreibig, *Die Rätsel der göttlichen Vorsehung*, 1886; W. Schmidt, *Die göttliche Vorsehung und das Selbstleben der Welt*, 1887; W. Herrmann, 'Die Lehre von der göttlichen Vorsehung,' in the *Christliche Welt*, 1887, col. 483 ff.; L. Nagel, 'Zur Lehre von der göttl. Vorsehung,' in the *Christliche Welt*, 1887, Nos. 20, 25, 36; W. Beyschlag, *Zur Verständigung über den christlichen Vorsehungsglauben*, 1888; O. Kirn, *Vorsehungsglaube und Naturwissenschaft*, 1903;

P. Mezger, *Die Rätsel des christlichen Vorsehungsglaubens*, 1904.

[2] 'Die Liebe Gottes' in the *Z.T.K.*, 1909, p. 347 ff.; also Herrmann's reply, *ibid.*, 1910, p. 78 ff.

[3] Cf. *supra*, pp. 3-5.

[4] *Die Willensfreiheit*, 1904, p. 199.

[5] To Henriette Herz, on February 2, 1807. *Schleiermachers Briefe*, edited by Rade (Jena, 1906), p. 362. It is the same false identification as we find in the *Der christl. Glaube*, § 46.

[6] *Die Rätsel der göttlichen Vorsehung*, 1886.

[7] *Christl. Welt*, 1887, p. 185 ff.

[8] Cf. Rümelin, 'Ueber den Zufall,' in his *Reden u. Aufsätze*, iii., 1894, p. 278 ff.

[9] *Religionsphilosophie*, 1886, pp. 166-208.

[10] *Die göttliche Vorsehung und das Selbstleben der Welt*, 1887.

[11] *Microcosmus* (Eng. trans.), i. p. 451 ff.

CHAPTER VII

[1] Cf. W. Herrmann's article 'Gebet' in Herzog's *Real-encyclopädie*, vi.[3], p. 386 ff.; M. Kähler, 'Berechtigung und Zuversichtlichkeit des Bittgebets,' in his *Dogmatische Zeitfragen*, ii.[2], p. 234 ff.; E. Elter, 'Gebetserhörung und Wunder,' in *Theol. Zeitschrift aus der Schweiz*, 1897; A. Bonus, *Zwischen den Zeilen*, ii. p. 29 ff.; H. Schuster, *Gott unser Gott*, 1910, p. 175 ff.

[2] Luke ii. 5-8, xviii. 1-8.

[3] *Der biblische Wunderbegriff*, p. 35.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 34; cf. pp. 44, 48, 50.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 50; cf. p. 34.

[7] *Ethics*, Part ii., conclusion.

[8] Cf. specially his sermon on 'Die Kraft des Gebetes, insofern es auf äussere Begebenheiten gerichtet ist.' It is No. 2 in the first collection, *Predigten, Band* I.—a collection which first appeared in 1801.

[9] The same deterministic prejudices are to be found in F. W. Robertson, who reproduces the sermon of Schleiermacher just referred to (*Sermons*, fourth series, p. 33): 'Hence, that humility which looks on ourselves as atoms, links in a mysterious chain, and shrinks from the dangerous wish to break the chain.' This is purely Stoic. The deterministic conception of the world is taken as representing the essence of the universe.

[10] *Im Kampf um die Weltanschauung*, 1888, p. 63.

[11] *Religionsphilosophie*, 1903, p. 306 ff.

[12] *Preussische Jahrbücher*, No. 133 (September 1908), p. 387 ff.

CHAPTER VIII

[1] *Essays* (ed. 1788), ii. p. 119.

[2] *Über hist. u. dogm. Methode in der Theologie*, 1900.

[3] *Das Christentum und die christliche Kirche der drei ersten Jahrhunderte*[2], 1860, p. 1 [Eng. trans. by Menzies, entitled *Baur's Church History*, p. 1].

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 1 [E. T., p. 1].

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 5-22 [E. T., pp. 4-23].

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 21 [E. T., p. 22].

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 22 [E. T., p. 23].

[8] Cf. also A. Ritschl's criticisms of Baur in the *Jahrbücher f. deutsche Theologie*, 1861, p. 444; also Baxmann, *ibid.*, 1862, p. 753.

[9] *Historische Zeitschrift*, 4, 1860, p. 109.

[10] *Ibid.*, 8, 1862, p. 109.

[11] *Ibid.*, 4, 1860, p. 101.

[12] Ritschl replies in the *J. f. d. Th.*, 1861, p. 429 ff.: 'Ueber geschichtliche Methode in der Erforschung des Urchristentums.' Zeller rejoins in 'Die hist. Kritik und das Wunder' in the *Hist. Zeit.*, 6, 1861, p. 356 ff. Ritschl answers this in the *Hist. Zeit.*, 8, 1862, p. 65 ff., and Zeller rejoins, *ibid.*, p. 100 ff. Finally in the article, 'Baurs speculative Geschichtskonstruktion und der Wunderanfang des Christentums' (*J. f. d. Th.*, 1862, p. 733 ff.), Baxmann essays to strike the balance of the discussion.

[13] Cf. with these analogies Soltau, *Hat Jesus Wunder getan?*

[14] *J. f. d. Th.*, 1861, p. 440.

[15] *Hist. Zeit.*, 6, 1861, p. 367 f.

[16] Cf. also *Unterricht in der christl. Religion*[3], § 17.

[17] *Hist. Zeit.*, 8, 1862, p. 97.

[18] *De genesi ad litteram*, vi. 13.

[19] *Konserv. Monatschrift*, 1906, p. 1123 ff. This curious attempt—derived, I imagine, from E. Dennert—to half explain the matter, half leave it miraculous, is not repeated in his other writings, *Das Wunder* and *Die Wunder Jesu*.

[20] *Realencyclop.*, Bd. 21[3], p. 566.

[21] Article 'Wunder' in Herzog's *Realencycl.*[3], 21, p. 558 ff., especially §§ 7-8. Cf. *Aus Religion und Geschichte*, Bd. ii.; *Zur syst. Theol.*, 1909, p. 127 ff.; also *Neue Kirchl. Zeit.*, 1908.

[22] *Zur syst. Theol.*, p. 146 f.

[23] P. 149.

[24] P. 144.

[25] *Zur syst. Theol.*, p. 136 f.

[26] Beth, *Das Wunder*, pp. 11, 47; Seeberg, *Zur syst. Theol.*, p. 139.

[27] *Christentum und Kirche der 3 ersten Jahrhunderte*[2], pp. 40, 45 [E. T., pp. 42, 47].

CHAPTER IX

[1] As Traub does in *Die Wunder im NT.*, pp. 1-11.

[2] Cf. *supra*, pp. 105-118.

[3] Cf., *e.g.*, Joël, *Der freie Wille*, 1908, p. 466 ff.

[4] Cf. P. Volkmann, *Erkenntnistheoretische Grundzüge der Naturwissenschaft*, 1910, [2], pp. 41-8.

[5] Joël, *Der freie Wille*, p. 554 f.

[6] Cf. on this 'telegram example' Lange, *Geschichte des Materialismus*, ii.[2], p. 440 ff.; R. Seydel, 'Die Kausalität des Willens,' in *Religion und Wissenschaft*, 1887, p. 223; Busse, *Geist und Körper*, 1903, p. 314 ff.

[7] Cf. *supra*, p. 212 ff.

[8] *Philosophie*, 1903, p. 327 ff.

[9] E.g. *de genesi ad litteram*, vi. 17: everything was bound to happen, for God knew it beforehand.

[10] *De servo arbitrio.*

[11] It would be more correct to say 'principle of causality,' for the very expression 'law of causality' leads to false inferences.

[12] *Gedanken und Tatsachen*, ii. p. 136.

[13] E. Zeller, *Geschichte der griech. Philosophie* [2], iii. 1, p. 148.

[14] Plutarch, *de fato*, 11 ('Nothing happens without a cause; there are always predetermining causes').

[15] Alexander Aphrodisiensis, *de fato*, 22 ('They hold that coming to be without a cause is like coming to be from what is not, and equally impossible').

[16] *Ibid.*, 30 ('Everything that happens is followed by something else with which it is necessarily linked as cause, and is preceded by something which is linked with it as its cause. For nothing in the world exists or happens without a cause, since there is nothing in it which is loose and

separate from all preceding events. For if an uncaused change were introduced, the world would be pulled asunder and dissevered, and would no longer remain for ever one, ruled according to a single order and arrangement').

[17] Cf. the objections to this position stated by Sir Oliver Lodge in his *Life and Matter*, p. 12 ff. (ed. 1909).

[18] 'Über psychische Kausalität und das Prinzip des psycholog. Parallelismus,' in his *Philos. Studien*, x., 1894, p. 112 ff.; *Grundzüge der physiolog. Psychologie*, iii.[5], p. 778 ff.

[19] *Die Willensfreiheit*, 1903, p. 301.

[20] *Psychologie* (German edition by Bendixen), 1887, p. 439.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 263.

[22] 'Psychologie' in *Kultur d. Gegenwart*, i. 6, p. 175.

[23] Cf. also Rümelin, *Reden und Aufsätze*, 3te Folge, 1894, p. 283: When a series of happenings is closed, we say: It was necessary. 'This necessity, which comes limping after the fact, must not be allowed to impose on us, or to restrain us from countering it by the statement that nothing of all that we do or experience is really necessary.' Everything might have turned out otherwise. That the laws of nature hold good where the conditions are present is obvious; but it is in no way dependent on the laws of nature whether or not these conditions are found co-existing.

[24] *Weltgeschichte*, 9, 2, p. 7 ff.

[25] *Über historische und dogmatische Methode*, p. 22.

[26] *Weltgeschichte*, 9, 2, p. 11.

[27] Joël, *Der freie Wille*, p. 495.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 508.

[29] So, *e.g.*, in H. Siebeck's reflections on 'Naturmacht und Menschenwille' in his *Zur Religionsphilosophie*, 1907, pp. 56-79.

[30] *Dogmatik*[3], §§ 333-335.

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